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SHERIDAN





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RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

S & S
LITTLE CLASSICS

Edited by Arthur D. Hall

Richard Brinsley Sheridan

SELECTIONS FROM

COMEDIES

and

SPEECHES

Also

VERSES TO THE MEMORY OF GARRICK

and

ANECDOTES AND WITTY SAYINGS



NEW YORK AND LONDON
STREET AND SMITH, PUBLISHERS

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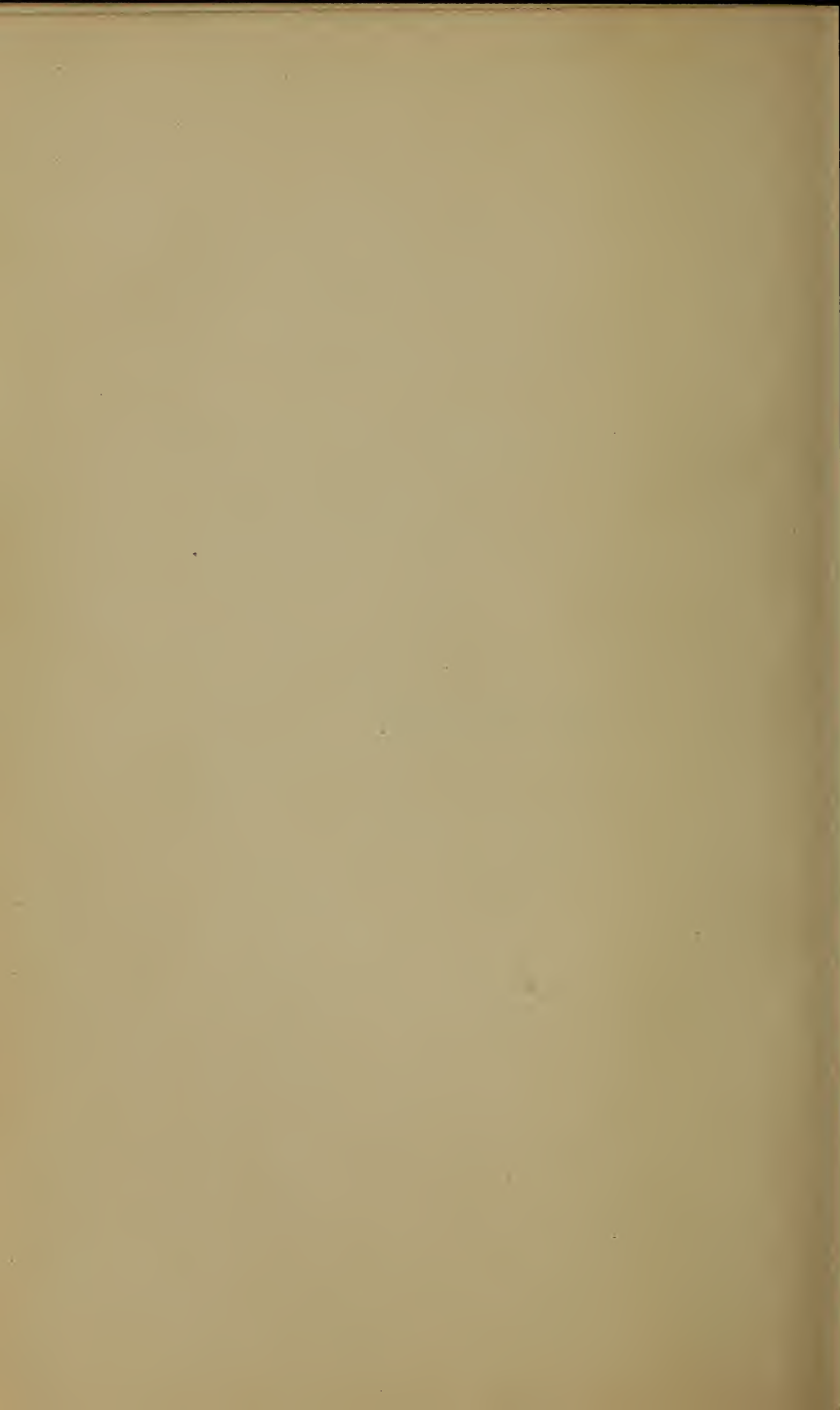
CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION,	ix
COMEDIES:	
Mrs. Malaprop's Opinions (The Ri- vals),	3
The Two Absolutes (The Rivals), . .	9
Bob Acres' Valor (The Rivals), . .	15
Quarrels Between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle (The School for Scandal),	22
The Screen Scene (The School for Scandal),	32
Friendly Criticism (The Critic), . .	53
The Art of Puffing (The Critic), . .	64
VERSES TO THE MEMORY OF GARRICK, . .	79
SPEECHES:	
On the Fourth Charge Against War- ren Hastings,	87
The Begum Speech,	107
A Reply to Burke,	129
On the French Revolution,	130

Contents.

	PAGE
An Answer to Lord Mornington,	133
On the People of England,	141
On the Rebellion in Ireland,	143
On the Probability of a French In- vasion,	145
Ridicule of Pitt and Addington,	151
Criticism of Appointments to Office,	154
Declination of Candidacy,	158
ANECDOTES AND WITTY SAYINGS,	165

Introduction.



Introduction.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan may indeed be called the Admirable Crichton of his day. There were few things he could not do in the line of brain work, and most of these he did superlatively well. He was wit, orator, poet and dramatist. Byron has said of him: "Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been *par excellence*, always the best of its kind. He has written the best comedy, 'The School for Scandal;' the best opera, 'The Duenna' (in my mind far before that St. Giles's lampoon, 'The Beggars' Opera'); the best farce, 'The Critic'—it is only too good for a farce—and the best address, the 'Monologue on Garrick;' and to crown all, delivered the very best oration, the famous 'Begum Speech,' ever conceived or heard in this country."

In Sheridan's writings every sentence is rounded and polished to a degree. Quick and clever as he was, however, he was a hard worker, and devoted infinite pains and much time to the products of his brain. This has been the case with the vast majority of great geniuses. As Sheridan himself has said in "Clio's Protest":

Introduction.

*“You write with ease to show your breeding,
But easy writing’s cursed hard reading.”*

Sheridan’s productions were neither easily written, nor are they hard reading. He polished, altered, shifted sentences and words about, until he had a brilliant and sparkling whole.

Sheridan began his career as a dramatist. Although he wrote and produced other plays, it is upon the three comedies, from which we give extracts here, that his fame as a playwright rests. All three are as amusing and interesting to-day as they were when first acted; they still, after a century and a quarter, hold the stage, and there is no sign that they will ever lag superfluous thereon. Moreover, like few plays, outside of Shakspeare, they are excellent reading, and can be thoroughly enjoyed without the additional aid of a mimic presentation. With the exception of a few poems of more or less merit, Sheridan made his entry into the literary arena, when “The Rivals” was brought out at Drury Lane Theatre, early in 1775. He was then twenty-four, and it was after his marriage to Miss Linley, the “Maid of Bath,” following a most romantic courtship. The comedy failed on its first representation, chiefly through the incompetency of the actor who essayed the character of Sir Lucius O’Trigger. Another performer was substituted, some changes

Introduction.

were made, and the play leaped at once into the height of popular favor. By this production, sentimental comedy was given a blow which finally proved fatal; but not without violent protest from its admirers.

In 1774, Sheridan became manager of Drury Lane Theatre, succeeding Garrick. The second play to be produced under the new *régime* was the celebrated "School for Scandal," which created a tremendous furore and enjoyed a run unprecedented for those days. In 1779 "The Critic" received its first performance, and also was extremely successful.

In 1780, chiefly through the good offices of Fox and Burke, Sheridan was sent to the House of Commons as a member for the borough of Stafford. During the first years of his political life, he produced but little impression. His connection with the stage, moreover, was the cause of many mortifications to him, for he was constantly taunted with it by members of the other party.

In following Fox into opposition, Sheridan became one of his most ardent and valuable supporters. In 1787 his great opportunity came. Burke started a subject which afforded the orators of his party an extraordinary occasion for the most brilliant displays of eloquence. This was the impeachment of Warren Hastings. To Sheridan was allotted the charge relating to the spoliation

Introduction.

of the Begum princesses of Oude. A considerable portion of his speech on this subject will be found in this volume.

Of this magnificent specimen of oratory Mr. Burke declared that it was "the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument and wit united, of which there was any record or tradition." Mr. Fox said, "all that he had ever heard, all that he had ever read, when compared with it, dwindled into nothing, and vanished like vapor before the sun." And Mr. Pitt acknowledged that "it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient and modern times, and possessed everything that genius or art could furnish, to agitate and control the human mind."

Later on, the speech known as the "Begum Speech," was delivered, and created no less excitement. Sheridan was now fully recognized as a very great orator, and he maintained his right to be considered such to the very end of his Parliamentary career. In the extracts from the most famous of his subsequent speeches which we have made, we have endeavored to show the varied extent of his powers, his wit, his eloquence, his humor and his scathing sarcasm. They have been taken from the best reports obtainable. It is a singular fact, however, and a matter of regret as well, that so few English orators of that time took any pains to have their speeches correctly transmitted to posterity.

Introduction.

Sheridan revised only one of his for publication.

Sheridan's political career closed in 1812. His very last words in Parliament, on his own motion relative to the overtures of peace from France, were as follows:

“Yet, after the general subjugation and ruin of Europe, should there ever exist an independent historian to record the awful events that produced this universal calamity, let that historian have to say—‘Great Britain fell, and with her fell all the best securities for the charities of human life, for the power and honor, the fame, the glory, and the liberties, not only of herself, but of the whole civilized world.’”

Sheridan was as unique in his personality as he was in his genius. For quickness of wit and readiness of repartee, he has rarely been equalled, never surpassed. The truth of this will readily be recognized by a perusal of the specimens we have collected under the heading of “Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.” His powers of fascination, too, were great, and neither dissipation nor his reputed character as a roué could affect his success in this direction.

Over the irregularities of his private life it is perhaps best to draw a veil. Suffice it to say, that he was accused of all sorts of profligacy and undue indulgences, but the stories told of him are probably somewhat

Introduction.

highly colored. It is certain, however, that his intimacy with the dissolute Prince of Wales, afterward George the Fourth, was, to say the least, productive of no benefit to him. But then, *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*. One age has no right to judge the manners and customs of another by its own.

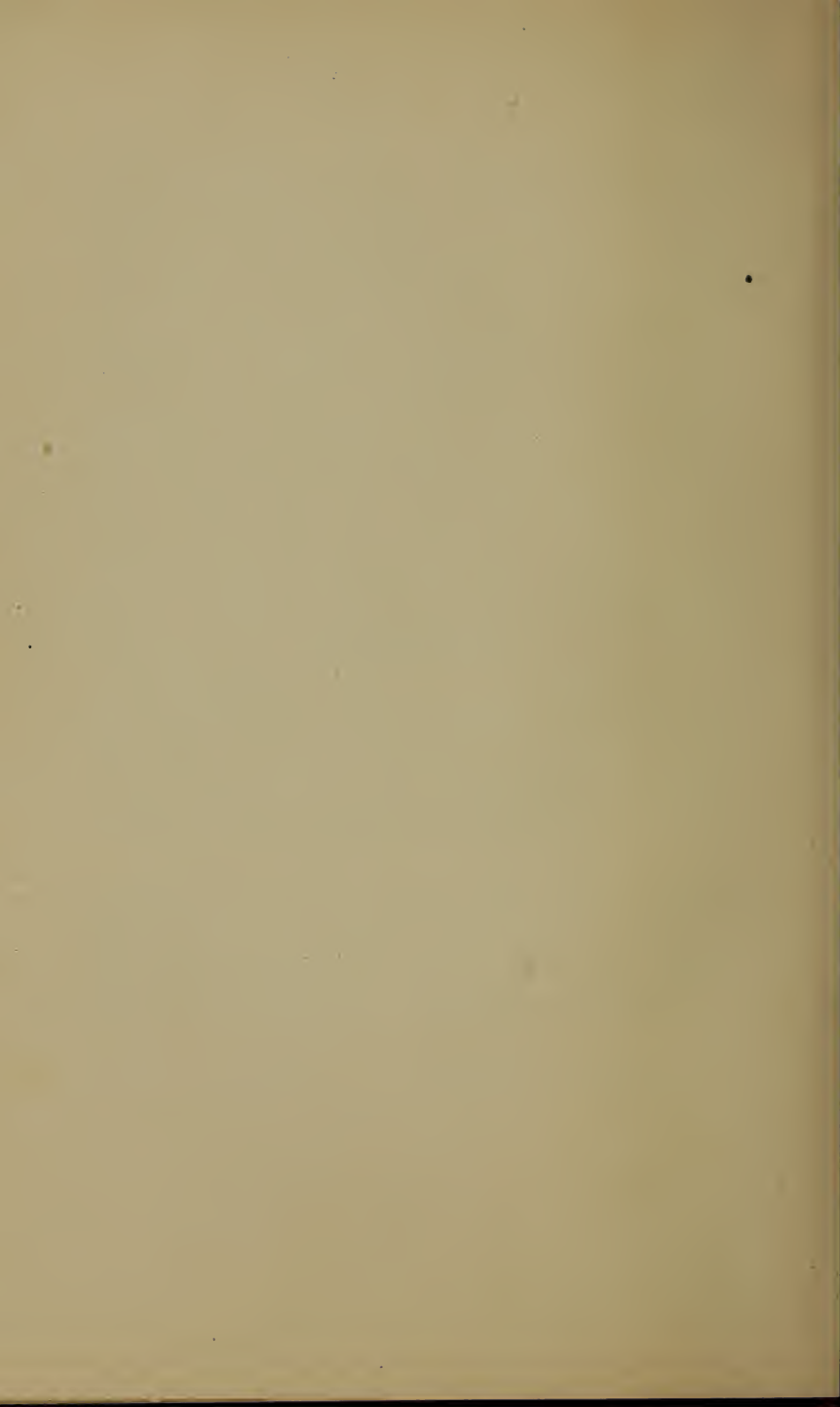
The last years of Sheridan's life were embittered by poverty, the clamors of legal pursuers, and the neglect of former friends. Yet, those who had been heedless of him when alive, flocked to do him honor when dead. An unprecedented array of rank and celebrity graced his funeral at Westminster Abbey, where he was buried in the Poets' Corner.

Lord Byron, who was deeply attached to Sheridan, after alluding in the most charitable way to his weaknesses, and saying that "what seemed vice might be but woe," closes his poem with the following lines :

*"Long shall we seek his likeness, long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that nature formed but one such man,
And broke the die in moulding Sheridan!"*

ARTHUR D. HALL.

Comedies.



Comedies.

MRS. MALAPROP'S OPINIONS.

THE RIVALS.—ACT I. SCENE II.

LYDIA on the stage.

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, and SIR ANTHONY
ABSOLUTE.

Mrs. Mal. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lyd. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs. Mal. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all—thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lyd. Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs. Mal. But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as

Sheridan.

much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anth. Why sure she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not!—ay, this comes of her reading!

Lyd. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus?

Mrs Mal. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it.—But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

Lyd. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preferment for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs. Mal. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a blackamoor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made!—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed!—But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lyd. Could I belie my thoughts so far as

Comedies.

to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. Mal. Take yourself to your room.—You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humors.

Lyd. Willingly, ma'am—I cannot change for the worse. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am,—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs. Mal. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library!—She had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers!—From that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

Mrs. Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year!—And depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs. Mal. Fy, fy, Sir Anthony! you surely speak laconically.

Sheridan.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. Mal. Observe, me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments.—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts;—and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries;—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not misspell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know;—and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess that you are a truly moderate

Comedies.

and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate—you say you have no objection to my proposal?

Mrs. Mal. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam. I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs. Mal. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection!—let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs. Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in his younger days, 'twas “Jack, do this;” —if he demurred, I knocked him down—and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. Mal. Ay, and the properest way, o' my conscience!—nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations;—and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sheridan.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently.—Well, I must leave you and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl.—Take my advice—keep a tight hand: if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about.

THE TWO ABSOLUTES.

THE RIVALS.—ACT II. SCENE I.

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *on the stage.*

Abs. Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack.—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

Abs. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it, for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business.—Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Abs. Pardon me, sir, I never saw you look

Sheridan.

more strong and hearty; and I pray frequently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty I may continue to plague you a long time. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world. I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention—and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abs. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude; I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.—Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. Oh, that shall be as your wife chooses.

Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay, settle that between you—settle that between you.

Abs. A wife, sir, did you say?

Comedies.

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mustn't forget her, though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference.

Abs. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Abs. I was, sir—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Abs. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.—Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affection for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Abs. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly that

Sheridan.

my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel.

Sir Anth. Then pray let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

Abs. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'ee, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a frenzy.

Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now damn me! if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by——

Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness! to——

Sir Anth. Zounds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on

Comedies.

each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum; she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humor for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir, I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence, if you please!—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word——

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! can't you be cool like me? What the devil can passion do?—Passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There, you sneer again! don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you

Sheridan.

dog! you play upon the meekness of my disposition!—Yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do everything on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you.—If not, zounds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me! if ever I call you Jack again!

[*Exit.*

Abs. Mild, gentle, considerate father, I kiss your hands.

BOB ACRES' VALOR.

THE RIVALS.—ACT V. SCENE III.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER and ACRES, with pistols.

Acres. By my valor! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance. Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you.—[*Measures paces along the stage.*] There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, Sir Lucius; but I should think forty or eight and thirty yards——

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no!—by my valor! there

Sheridan.

is no merit in killing him so near: do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot:—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me.

Sir Luc. Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand——

Sir Luc. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters:

Acres. A quietus!

Sir Luc. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files!—I've practiced that—there, Sir Lucius—there.—[*Puts himself in an attitude.*] A side-front, hey? Odd! I'll make myself small enough: I'll stand edgeways.

Comedies.

Sir Luc. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim——

[*Levelling at him.*]

Acres. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side—'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir Luc. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him*—let him see the broad side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir Luc. Ay—may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ee! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one; so, by my valor! I will stand edgeways.

Sir Luc. [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no, faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!——

Sir Luc. Ay.—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Sheridan.

Acres. There are two of them indeed!—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir Luc. Run!

Acres. No—I say—we won't run, by my valor!

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir Luc. O fy!—consider your honor.

Acres. Ay—true—my honor. Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honor.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming.

[*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—If my valor should leave me!—Valor will come and go.

Sir Luc. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valor is certainly going!—it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands!

Sir Luc. Your honor—your honor.—Here they are.

Acres. O mercy!—now—that I was safe at Clod Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Comedies.

Enter FAULKLAND and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir Luc. Gentlemen, your most obedient.—Hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Abs. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—[*To FAULKLAND.*] So. Mr. Beverley, if you'll choose your weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, sir, did you not come here to fight Mr. Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out.

Abs. O pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter——

Sheridan.

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland;—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian.—Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why no—Sir Lucius—I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face!—If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Luc. Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity——

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute?—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Zounds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valor has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my

Comedies.

heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss hall, or anything of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me coward; coward was the word, by my valor!

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 't isn't that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, Fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week—don't you, Bob?

Acres. Ay—at home!

QUARRELS BETWEEN SIR PETER AND LADY TEAZLE.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.—ACT II. SCENE I.
AND ACT III. SCENE I.

I.

Enter SIR PETER *and* LADY TEAZLE.

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

Lady Teaz. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and what's more, I will too. What though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

Sir Pet. Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Lady Teaz. Authority! No, to be sure:—if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.

Comedies.

Sir Pet. Old enough!—ay, there it is. Well well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance!

Lady Teaz. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon into a greenhouse, and give a *fête champêtre* at Christmas.

Lady Teaz. And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet!

Sir Pet. Oons! madam—if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady Teaz. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle when I saw you first sitting at your tambour, in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smoot

Sheridan.

over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

Lady Teaz. Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

Lady Teaz. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinnet to stum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Pet. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—*vis-à-vis*—and three powdered footmen before your chair; and, in summer, a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse?

Lady Teaz. No—I swear I never did that: I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Pet. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank—in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady Teaz. Well, then, and there is but one

Comedies.

thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, that is——

Sir Pet. My widow, I suppose?

Lady Teaz. Hem! hem!

Sir Pet. I thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself; for, though your ill-conduct may disturb my peace of mind, it shall never break my heart, I promise you: however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady Teaz. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Sir Pet. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady Teaz. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Pet. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teaz. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Ay—there again—taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teaz. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter! and, after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, since we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's?

Sheridan.

Sir Pet. Ay, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there!

Lady Teas. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

Lady Teas. What, would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Pet. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady Teas. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace.

Sir Pet. Grace, indeed!

Lady Teas. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse: when I sav an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor; and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

Sir Pet. Well, well, I'll call in, just to look after my own character.

Lady Teas. Then, indeed, you must make

Comedies.

haste after me, or you'll be too late. So good-bye to ye. [Exit.

Sir Pet. So—I have gained much by my intended expostulation! Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasantly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me. [Exit.

II.

SIR PETER TEAZLE *on the stage.*

Sir Pet. Was ever man so crossed as I am, everything conspiring to fret me!—[*Lady Teazle sings without.*] But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady Teaz. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill humored when I am not by.

Sir Pet. Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good humored at all times.

Lady Teaz. I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at

Sheridan.

this moment. Do be good humored now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Pet. Two hundred pounds; what an't I to be in a good humor without paying for it! But speak to me thus, and i'faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady Teaz. Oh, no—there—my note of hand will do as well. [Offering her hand.

Sir Pet. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you: but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady Teaz. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Pet. Well—then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady Teaz. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would; and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive—

Lady Teaz. Ay, so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Comedies.

Sir Pet. Indeed!

Lady Teaz. Ay, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any means.

Sir Pet. Thank you.

Lady Teaz. And I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. And you prophesied right; and we shall now be the happiest couple——

Lady Teaz. And never differ again?

Sir Pet. No, never!—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady Teaz. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter: indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Pet. Now, see, my angel! take care—contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady Teaz. Then, don't you begin it, my love!

Sir Pet. There, now! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady Teaz. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear——

Sheridan.

Sir Pet. There! now you want to quarrel again.

Lady Teaz. No, I'm sure I don't: but, if you will be so peevish——

Sir Pet. There now! who begins first?

Lady Teaz. Why, you, to be sure. I said nothing—but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam: the fault's in your own temper.

Lady Teaz. Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward impertinent gipsy.

Lady Teaz. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

Lady Teaz. So much the better.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam: 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest 'squires in the neighborhood!

Lady Teaz. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Sir Pet. Ay, ay, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me; you never had such an offer before.

Lady Teaz. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy

Comedies.

Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

Sir Pet. I have done with you, madam. You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, you and Charles are, not without grounds——

Lady Teaz. Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Pet. Very well, madam! very well! a separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

Lady Teaz. Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple, and never differ again, you know: ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you—so, bye! bye! [*Exit.*

Sir Pet. Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper: no! she may break my heart, but she shan't keep her temper.

[*Exit.*

THE SCREEN SCENE

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.—ACT IV. SCENE III.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE *and* SERVANT.

Jos. Surf. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Ser. No, sir.

Jos. Surf. [*Aside.*] I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

[*Knocking without.*]

Ser. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Jos. Surf. Hold! See whether it is or not, before you go to the door: I have a particular message for you if it should be my brother.

Ser. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

Jos. Surf. Stay, stay: draw that screen before the window—that will do;—my opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so curious a temper.—[SERVANT *draws the screen, and exit.*] I have a difficult hand to play in this affair.

Comedies.

Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret,—at least, till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady Teaz. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O Lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

Jos. Surf. O madam, punctuality is a species of constancy very unfashionable in a lady of quality.

[Places chairs and sits after LADY TEAZLE *is seated.*

Lady Teaz. Upon my word, you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too—that's the best of the story, isn't it?

Jos. Surf. I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up. *[Aside.*

Lady Teaz. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. *[Aside.]* Indeed I do not.—
[Aloud.] Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady Teaz. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking, to have the

Sheridan.

most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too; that's what vexes me.

Jos. Surf. Ay, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation; yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed; for, when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady Teaz. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed 'tis monstrous!

Jos. Surf. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to endeavor to out-wit him.

Lady Teaz. Indeed! So that, if he suspects me without cause, it follows, that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't?

Jos. Surf. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you; and in that

Comedies.

case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady Teaz. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence——

Jos. Surf. Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake! 'Tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of St. Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions? why, the consciousness of your own innocence.

Lady Teaz. 'Tis very true!

Jos. Surf. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

Lady Teaz. Do you think so?

Jos. Surf. Oh, I'm sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once, for—in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

Lady Teaz. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own

Sheridan.

defence, and part with my virtue to preserve my reputation?

Jos. Surf. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

Lady Teaz. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

Jos. Surf. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

Lady Teaz. Why, if my understanding were once convinced——

Jos. Surf. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes—Heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

Lady Teaz. Don't you think we may as well leave honor out of the argument? [*Rises.*]

Jos. Surf. Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Lady Teaz. I doubt they do, indeed; and I will fairly own to you that, if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill-usage sooner than your honorable logic, after all.

Jos. Surf. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of—— [*Taking her hand.*]

Re-enter SERVANT.

'Sdeath, you blockhead—what do you want?

Ser. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Comedies.

Jos. Surf. Sir Peter!—Oons—the devil!

Lady Teaz. Sir Peter! O Lud! I'm ruined!
I'm ruined!

Ser. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady Teaz. Oh! I'm quite undone! What will become of me? Now, Mr. Logic—Oh! mercy, sir, he's on the stairs—I'll get behind here—and if ever I'm so imprudent again——

[*Goes behind the screen.*]

Jos. Surf. Give me that book.

[*Sits down. SERVANT pretends to adjust his chair.*]

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

Sir Pet. Ay, ever improving himself—Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface——

[*Pats JOSEPH on the shoulder.*]

Jos. Surf. Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon.—[*Gaping, throws away the book.*] I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Pet. 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps.

Jos. Surf. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Ser. Pet. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Sheridan.

Jos. Surf. Ay, or to hide anything in a hurry either. [Aside.

Sir Pet. Well, I have a little private business——

Jos. Surf. You need not stay. [To SERVANT.

Ser. No, sir. [Exit.

Jos. Surf. Here's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg——

Sir Pet. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me very unhappy.

Jos. Surf. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

Sir Pet. Yes, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

Jos. Surf. Indeed! you astonish me!

Sir Pet. Yes! and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

Jos. Surf. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Pet. Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

Jos. Surf. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Pet. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

Comedies.

Jos. Surf. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Pet. Oh, no. What say you to Charles?

Jos. Surf. My brother! impossible!

Sir Pet. Oh, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

Jos. Surf. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Pet. True; but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

Jos. Surf. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

Sir Pet. Ay; but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Jos. Surf. That's very true.

Sir Pet. And then, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor, who had married a girl.

Jos. Surf. That's true, to be sure—they would laugh.

Sir Pet. Laugh! ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Jos. Surf. No, you must never make it public.

Sir Pet. But then again—that the nephew

Sheridan.

of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Jos. Surf. Ay, there's the point. When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Pet. Ay—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian: in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him—my advice!

Jos. Surf. Oh, 'tis not to be credited! There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine—I disclaim kindred with him: for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Pet. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Jos. Surf. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

Sir Pet. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her

Comedies.

own way, and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and, if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.

Jos. Surf. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous.—[*Aside.*] I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

Sir Pet. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

Jos. Surf. Nor I, if I could help it. [*Aside.*

Sir Pet. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Jos. Surf. [*Softly.*] Oh, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Pet. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Jos. Surf. [*Softly.*] I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate!—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way!

Sir Pet. And though you are averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Jos. Surf. Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me.

Sheridan.

I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never——

Re-enter SERVANT.

Well, sir?

Ser. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

Jos. Surf. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within—I'm out for the day.

Sir Pet. Stay—hold—a thought has struck me:—you shall be at home.

Jos. Surf. Well, well, let him up.—[*Exit* SERVANT.] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.

[*Aside.*

Sir Pet. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere, then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

Jos. Surf. Oh, fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?—to trepan my brother too?

Sir Pet. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me: [*Going up*] here, behind the screen will be—Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener here already—I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

Comedies.

Jos. Surf. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me; and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

Sir Pet. Ah, Joseph! Joseph! Did I ever think that you——But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Jos. Surf. Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it!

Sir Pet. No! then, faith, let her hear it out.—Here's a closet will do as well.

Jos. Surf. Well, go in there.

Sir Pet. Sly rogue! sly rogue!

[*Goes into the closet.*]

Jos. Surf. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady Teaz. [*Peeping.*] Couldn't I steal off?

Jos. Surf. Keep close, my angel!

Sir Pet. [*Peeping.*] Joseph, tax him home.

Jos. Surf. Back, my dear friend!

Lady Teaz. [*Peeping.*] Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

Jos. Surf. Be still, my life!

Sir Pet. [*Peeping.*] You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Sheridan.

Jos. Surf. In, in, my dear Sir Peter!—'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

Enter CHARLES SURFACE.

Chas. Surf. Holla! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Jos. Surf. Neither, brother, I assure you.

Chas. Surf. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Jos. Surf. He was, brother; but, hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

Chas. Surf. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Jos. Surf. No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Chas. Surf. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

Jos. Surf. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Chas. Surf. Who, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word.—Ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?—or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

Jos. Surf. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh——

Chas. Surf. True, true, as you were going to say—then, seriously, I never had the least

Comedies.

idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Jos. Surf. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

[*Raising his voice.*

Chas. Surf. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Jos. Surf. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you——

Chas. Surf. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father——

Jos. Surf. Well!

Chas. Surf. Why, I believe I should be obliged to——

Jos. Surf. What?

Chas. Surf. To borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming me with Lady Teazle; for, i'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

Jos. Surf. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Chas. Surf. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances——

Sheridan.

Jos. Surf. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Chas. Surf. Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember one day, when I called here——

Jos. Surf. Nay, p'rythee, Charles——

Chas. Surf. And found you together——

Jos. Surf. Zounds, sir, I insist——

Chas. Surf. And another time when your servant——

Jos. Surf. Brother, brother, a word with you!—[*Aside.*] Gad, I must stop him.

Chas. Surf. Informed, I say, that——

Jos. Surf. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

Chas. Surf. How Sir Peter! Where is he?

Jos. Surf. Softly, there!

[*Points to the closet.*]

Chas. Surf. Oh, 'fore Heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

Jos. Surf. No, no——

Chas. Surf. I say. Sir Peter, come into court.—[*Pulls in SIR PETER.*] What! my old guardian!—What!—turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog? Oh, fie! Oh, fie!

Sir Pet. Give me your hand, Charles—I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph—'twas my plan!

Chas. Surf. Indeed!

Sir Pet. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did: what

Comedies.

I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Chas. Surf. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more. Wasn't it, Joseph?

Sir Pet. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Chas. Surf. Ah, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

Chas. Surf. But you might as well have suspected him as me in this matter, for all that. Mightn't he, Joseph?

Sir Pet. Well, well, I believe you.

Jos. Surf. Would they were both out of the room! [*Aside.*]

Sir Pet. And in future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

Re-enter SERVANT, and whispers JOSEPH SURFACE.

Serv. Lady Sneerwell is below, and says she will come up.

Jos. Surf. Lady Sneerwell! Gad's life! she must not come here. [*Exit SERVANT.*] Gentlemen, I beg pardon—I must wait on you down stairs: here is a person come on particular business.

Chas. Surf. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Jos. Surf. [*Aside.*] They must not be left together.—[*Aloud.*] I'll send Lady Sneerwell

Sheridan.

away, and return directly.—[*Aside to SIR PETER.*] Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Pet. [*Aside to JOSEPH SURFACE.*] I! not for the world!—[*Exit JOSEPH SURFACE.*] Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Chas. Surf. Psha! he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Sir Pet. No, no,—come, come,—you wrong him. No, no, Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect.—[*Aside.*] I have a great mind to tell him—we should have such a laugh at Joseph.

Chas. Surf. Oh, hang him! he's a very anchorite, a young hermit!

Sir Pet. Hark'ee—you must not abuse him: he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Chas. Surf. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Pet. No—but—this way.—[*Aside.*] Egad, I'll tell him.—[*Aloud.*] Hark'ee—have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

Chas. Surf. I should like it of all things.

Sir Pet. Then, i'faith, we will! I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

[*Whispers.*]

Comedies.

Chas. Surf. What! Joseph? you jest.

Sir Pet. Hush!—a little French milliner—
and the best of the jest is—she's in the room
now.

Chas. Surf. The devil she is!

Sir Pet. Hush! I tell you.

[*Points to the screen.*]

Chas. Surf. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's
unveil her!

Sir Pet. No, no, he's coming:—you shan't,
indeed!

Chas. Surf. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at
the little milliner!

Sir Pet. Not for the world!—Joseph will
never forgive me.

Chas. Surf. I'll stand by you——

Sir Pet. Odds, here he is!

[*CHARLES SURFACE throws down the screen.*]

Re-enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Chas. Surf. Lady Teazle, by all that's won-
derful!

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, by all that's damna-
ble!

Chas. Surf. Sir Peter, this is one of the
smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad,
you seem all to have been diverting yourselves
here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is
out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship
to inform me? Not a word!—Brother, will
you be pleased to explain this matter? What!
is Morality dumb too?—Sir Peter, though I

Sheridan.

found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute!—Well—though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I'll leave you to yourselves—[*Going.*] Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness.—Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! [Exit.

Jos. Surf. Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

Sir Pet. If you please, sir.

Jos. Surf. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—she, sir, I say—called here—in order that—I might explain these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Pet. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

Lady Teaz. For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

Sir Pet. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

Comedies.

Lady Teaz. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Pet. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

Jos. Surf. [*Aside to LADY TEAZLE.*] 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

Lady Teaz. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

Sir Pet. Ay, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

Lady Teaz. Hear me, Sir Peter!—I came here on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

Sir Pet. Now, I believe, the truth is coming, indeed!

Jos. Surf. The woman's mad!

Lady Teaz. No, sir; she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means.—Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me—but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has so penetrated to my heart, that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected

Sheridan.

honorable addresses to his ward—I behold him now in a light so truly despicable, that I shall never against respect myself for having listened to him. [Exit.

Jos. Surf. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows——

Sir Pet. That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

Jos. Surf. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to——

Sir Pet. Oh, damn your sentiments!

[*Exeunt* SIR PETER and JOSEPH SURFACE,
talking.

FRIENDLY CRITICISM.

THE CRITIC.—ACT I. SCENE I.

DANGLE, MRS. DANGLE, and SNEER on the stage.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Sir Fretful Plagiary, sir.

Dang. Beg him to walk up.—[*Exit* SERVANT.] Now, Mrs. Dangle, Sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs. Dang. I confess he is a favorite of mine, because everybody else abuses him.

Sneer. Very much to the credit of your charity, madam, if not of your judgment.

Dang. But, egad, he allows no merit to any author but himself, that's the truth on't—though he's my friend.

Sneer. Never.—He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six and thirty; and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works, can be exceeded only by

Sheridan.

the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

Dang. Very true, egad—though he's my friend.

Sneer. Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures; though, at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorched parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism: yet is he so covetous of popularity, that he had rather be abused than not mentioned at all.

Dang. There's no denying it—though he is my friend.

Sneer. You have read the tragedy he has just finished, haven't you?

Dang. Oh, yes; he sent it to me yesterday.

Sneer. Well, and you think it execrable, don't you?

Dang. Why, between ourselves, egad, I must own—though he is my friend—that it is one of the most—He's here—[*Aside.*]—finished and most admirable perform—

Sir Fret. [*Without.*] Mr. Sneer with him, did you say?

Enter SIR FRETFUL PLAGIARY.

Dang. Ah, my dear friend!—Egad, we were just speaking of your tragedy.—Admirable, Sir Fretful, admirable!

Sneer. You never did anything beyond it, Sir Fretful—never in your life.

Sir Fret. You make me extremely happy;

Comedies.

for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there isn't a man in the world whose judgment I value as I do yours and Mr. Dangle's.

Mrs. Dang. They are only laughing at you, Sir Fretful; for it was but just now that——

Dang. Mrs. Dangle!—Ah, Sir Fretful, you know Mrs. Dangle.—My friend Sneer was rallying just now:—he knows how she admires you, and——

Sir Fret. O Lord, I am sure Mr. Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to——[*Aside.*] A damned double-faced fellow!

Dang. Yes, yes—Sneer will jest—but a better humored——

Sir Fret. Oh, I know——

Dang. He has a ready turn for ridicule—his wit costs him nothing.

Sir Fret. No, egad—or I should wonder how he came by it. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Dang. Because his jest is always at the expense of his friend. [*Aside.*

Dang. But, Sir Fretful, have you sent your play to the managers yet?—or can I be of any service to you?

Sir Fret. No, no, I thank you: I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it.—I thank you though.—I sent it to the manager of Covent Garden Theatre this morning.

Sneer. I should have thought now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at Drury Lane.

Sheridan.

Sir Fret. O lud! no—never send a play there while I live—hark'ee!

[*Whispers* SNEER.

Sneer. Writes himself!—I know he does.

Sir Fret. I say nothing—I take away from no man's merit—am hurt at no man's good fortune—I say nothing.—But this I will say—through all my knowledge of life, I have observed—that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy.

Sneer. I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir Fret. Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.

Sneer. What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary?

Sir Fret. Steal!—to be sure they may; and, egad, serve your best thoughts as gypsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for their own.

Sneer. But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and he, you know, never——

Sir Fret. That's no security: a dexterous plagiarist may do anything. Why, sir, for aught I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

Sneer. That might be done, I dare be sworn.

Sir Fret. And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole——

Comedies.

Dang. If it succeeds.

Sir Fret. Ay, but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.

Sneer. I'll tell you how you may hurt him more.

Sir Fret. How?

Sneer. Swear he wrote it.

Sir Fret. Plague on't now, Sneer, I shall take it ill!—I believe you want to take away my character as an author.

Sneer. Then I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to me.

Sir Fret. Hey!—sir!—

Dang. Oh, you know, he never means what he says.

Sir Fret. Sincerely then—you do like the piece?

Sneer. Wonderfully!

Sir Fret. But come now, there must be something that you think might be mended, hey?—Mr. Dangle, has nothing struck you?

Dang. Why, faith, it is but an ungracious thing, for the most part, to——

Sir Fret. With most authors it is just so indeed; they are in general strangely tenacious! But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me; for what is the purpose of showing a work to a friend, if you don't mean to profit by his opinion?

Sneer. Very true.—Why then, though I seri-

Sheridan.

ously admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection; which, if you'll give me leave, I'll mention.

Sir Fret. Sir, you can't oblige me more.

Sneer. I think it wants incident.

Sir Fret. Good God! you surprise me!—wants incident!

Sneer. Yes; I own I think the incidents are too few.

Sir Fret. Good God! Believe me, Mr. Sneer, there is no person for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference. But I protest to you, Mr. Sneer, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded.—My dear Dangle, how does it strike you?

Dang. Really I can't agree with my friend Sneer. I think the plot quite sufficient; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If I might venture to suggest anything, it is that the interest rather falls off in the fifth.

Sir Fret. Rises, I believe you mean, sir.

Dang. No, I don't, upon my word.

Sir Fret. Yes, yes, you do, upon my soul!—it certainly don't fall off, I assure you.—No, no; it don't fall off.

Dang. Now, Mrs. Dangle, didn't you say it struck you in the same light?

Mrs. Dang. No, indeed, I did not.—I did not see a fault in any part of the play, from the beginning to the end.

Comedies.

Sir Fret. Upon my soul, the women are the best judges after all!

Mrs. Dang. Or, if I made any objection, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece; but that I was afraid it was, on the whole, a little too long.

Sir Fret. Pray, madam, do you speak as to duration of time; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out?

Mrs. Dang. O lud! no.—I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir Fret. Then I am very happy—very happy indeed—because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play. I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste; but, on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs. Dang. Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr. Dangle's drawling manner of reading it to me.

Sir Fret. Oh, if Mr. Dangle read it, that's quite another affair!—But, I assure you, Mrs. Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and a half, I'll undertake to read you the whole from beginning to end, with the prologue and epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs. Dang. I hope to see it on the stage next.

Dang. Well, Sir Fretful, I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the newspaper criticisms as you do of ours.

Sheridan.

Sir Fret. The newspapers! Sir, they are the most villainous—licentious—abominable—infernal—Not that I ever read them—no—I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.

Dang. You are quite right; for it certainly must hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take.

Sir Fret. No, quite the contrary! their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric—I like it of all things. An author's reputation is only in danger from their support.

Sneer. Why that's true—and that attack, now, on you the other day——

Sir Fret. What? where?

Dang. Ay, you mean in a paper of Thursday; it was completely ill-natured, to be sure.

Sir Fret. Oh, so much the better.—Ha! ha! ha! I wouldn't have it otherwise.

Dang. Certainly it is only to be laughed at; for——

Sir Fret. You don't happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you?

Sneer. Pray, Dangle—Sir Fretful seems a little anxious——

Sir Fret. O lud, no!—anxious!—not I—not the least.—I—but one may as well hear, you know.

Dang. Sneer, do you recollect?—[*Aside to SNEER.*] Make out something.

Sneer. [*Aside to DANGLE.*] I will.—[*Aloud.*] Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Comedies.

Sir Fret. Well, and pray now—not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention or original genius whatever; though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir Fret. Ha! ha! ha!—very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your commonplace-book—where stray jokes and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost and stolen office.

Sir Fret. Ha! ha! ha!—very pleasant!

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste—but that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sentiments—like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir Fret. Ha! ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression, but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic encumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms!

Sir Fret. Ha! ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your

Sheridan.

style, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsey-woolsey, while your imitations of Shakespeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir Fret. Ha!

Sneer. In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating; so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize!

Sir Fret. [*After great agitation.*] Now, another person would be vexed at this!

Sneer. Oh! but I wouldn't have told you—only to divert you.

Sir Fret. I know it—I am diverted.—Ha! ha! ha!—not the least invention!—Ha! ha! ha!—very good!—very good!

Sneer. Yes—no genius! ha! ha! ha!

Dang. A severe rogue! ha! ha! ha! But you are quite right, Sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir Fret. To be sure—for if there is anything to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it; and, if it is abuse—why one is always sure to hear of it from one damned good-natured friend or another!

Dang. Now, Sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer, egad, Mr. Puff's your man.

Comedies.

Sir Fret. Psha! sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it?

Dang. True, I had forgot that. But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr. Sneer——

Sir Fret. Zounds! no, Mr. Dangle; don't I tell you these things never fret me in the least?

Dang. Nay, I only thought——

Sir Fret. And let me tell you, Mr. Dangle, 'tis damned affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt when I tell you I am not.

Sneer. But why so warm, Sir Fretful?

Sir Fret. Gad's life! Mr. Sneer, you are as absurd as Dangle; how often must I repeat it to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the damned nonsense you have been repeating to me!—and, let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen—and, then, your disrespect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms—and I shall treat it with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt—and so your servant. [*Exit.*

THE ART OF PUFFING.

THE CRITIC.—ACT I. SCENE II.

DANGLE *and* SNEER.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Mr. Puff, sir.

[*Exit.*

Enter PUFF.

Dang. My dear Puff!

Puff. My dear Dangle, how is it with you?

Dang. Mr. Sneer, give me leave to introduce Mr. Puff to you.

Puff. Mr. Sneer is this?—Sir, he is a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendent judgment——

Sneer. Dear sir——

Dang. Nay, don't be modest, Sneer; my friend Puff only talks to you in the style of his profession.

Sneer. His profession!

Puff. Yes, sir; I make no secret of the trade I follow among friends and brother authors. Dangle knows I love to be frank on

Comedies.

the subject, and to advertise myself *vivâ voce*.—I am sir, a practitioner in panegyric, or, to speak more plainly, a professor of the art of puffing, at your service—or anybody else's.

Sneer. Sir, you are very obliging!—I believe, Mr. Puff, I have often admired your talents in the daily prints.

Puff. Yes, sir, I flatter myself I do as much business in that way as any six of the fraternity in town.—Devilish hard work all the summer, friend Dangle—never worked harder! But, hark'ee—the winter managers were a little sore, I believe.

Dang. No, I believe they took it all in good part.

Puff. Ay! then that must have been affectation in them; for, egad, there were some of the attacks which there was no laughing at!

Sneer. Ay, the humorous ones.—But I should think, Mr. Puff, that authors would in general be able to do this sort of work for themselves.

Puff. Why, yes—but in a clumsy way. Besides, we look on that as an encroachment, and so take the opposite side. I dare say, now, you conceive half the very civil paragraphs and advertisements you see to be written by the parties concerned, or their friends? No such thing: nine out of ten manufactured by me in the way of business.

Sneer. Indeed!

Sheridan.

Puff. Even the auctioneers now — the auctioneers, I say—though the rogues have lately got some credit for their language—not an article of the merit theirs; take them out of their pulpits, and they are as dull as catalogues!—No, sir; 'twas I first enriched their style—'twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyrical superlatives, each epithet rising above the other, like the bidders in their own auction-rooms! From me they learned to inlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor; by me too their inventive faculties were called forth:—yes, sir, by me they were instructed to clothe ideal walls with gratuitous fruits—to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary groves—to teach courteous shrubs to nod their approbation of the grateful soil; or, on emergencies, to raise upstart oaks, where there never had been an acorn; to create a delightful vicinage without the assistance of a neighbor; or fix the temple of Hygeia in the fens of Lincolnshire!

Dang. I am sure you have done them infinite service; for now, when a gentleman is ruined, he parts with his house with some credit.

Sneer. Service! if they had any gratitude, they would erect a statue to him; they would figure him as a presiding Mercury, the god of traffic and fiction, with a hammer in his hand instead of a caduceus.—But pray, Mr. Puff,

Comedies.

what first put you on exercising your talents in this way?

Puff. Egad, sir, sheer necessity!—the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention. You must know, Mr. Sneer, that from the first time I tried my hand at an advertisement, my success was such, that for some time after I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

Sneer. How, pray?

Puff. Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

Sneer. By your misfortunes!

Puff. Yes, sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it.

Sneer. From sickness and misfortunes! You practised as a doctor and an attorney at once?

Puff. No, egad; both maladies and miseries were my own.

Sneer. Hey! what the plague!

Dang. 'Tis true, i'faith.

Puff. Hark'ee!—By advertisements—*To the charitable and humane!* and *To those whom Providence hath blessed with affluence!*

Sneer. Oh, I understand you.

Puff. And, in truth, I deserved what I got! for, I suppose never man went through such a series of calamities in the same space of time. Sir, I was five times made a bankrupt, and reduced from a state of affluence,

Sheridan.

by a train of unavoidable misfortunes; then, sir, though a very industrious tradesman, I was twice burned out, and lost my little all both times: I lived upon those fires a month. I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs: that told very well; for I had the case strongly attested, and went about to collect the subscriptions myself.

Dang. Egad, I believe that was when you first called on me.

Puff. In November last?—O no; I was at that time a close prisoner in the Marshalsea, for a debt benevolently contracted to serve a friend. I was afterwards twice tapped for a dropsy, which declined into a very profitable consumption. I was then reduced to—O no—then, I became a widow with six helpless children, after having had eleven husbands pressed, and being left every time eight months gone with child, and without money to get me into an hospital!

Sneer. And you bore all with patience, I make no doubt?

Puff. Why, yes; though I made some occasional attempts at *felo de se*; but as I did not find those rash actions answer, I left off killing myself very soon. Well, sir, at last, what with bankruptcies, fires, gouts, dropsies, imprisonments and other valuable calamities, having got together a pretty handsome sum, I determined to quit a business which had

Comedies.

always gone rather against my conscience, and in a more liberal way still to indulge my talents for fiction and embellishments, through my favourite channels of diurnal communication—and so, sir, you have my history.

Sneer. Most obligingly communicative indeed! and your confession, if published, might certainly serve the cause of true charity, by rescuing the most useful channels of appeal to benevolence from the cant of imposition. But surely, Mr. Puff, there is no great mystery in your present profession?

Puff. Mystery, sir! I will take upon me to say the matter was never scientifically treated nor reduced to rule before.

Sneer. Reduced to rule!

Puff. O lud, sir, you are very ignorant, I am afraid!—Yes, sir, puffing is of various sorts; the principal are, the puff direct, the puff preliminary, the puff collateral, the puff collusive, and the puff oblique or puff by implication. These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of Letter to the Editor, Occasional Anecdote, Impartial Critique, Observation from Correspondent, or Advertisement from the Party.

Sneer. The puff direct, I can conceive——

Puff. O yes, that's simple enough! For instance—a new comedy or farce is to be produced at one of the theatres (though by-the-by they don't bring out half what they ought to do)—the author, suppose Mr. Smat-

Sheridan.

ter, or Mr. Dapper, or any particular friend of mine—very well; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received; I have the plot from the author, and only add—“characters strongly drawn—highly colored—hand of a master—fund of genuine humor—mine of invention—neat dialogue—Attic salt.” Then for the performance—“Mr. Dodd was astonishingly great in the character of Sir Harry. That universal and judicious actor, Mr. Palmer, perhaps never appeared to more advantage than in the colonel;—but it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr. King: indeed he more than merited those repeated bursts of applause which he drew from a most brilliant and judicious audience. As to the scenery—the miraculous powers of Mr. De Louthembourg’s pencil are universally acknowledged. In short, we are at a loss which to admire most, the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and liberality of the managers, the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers.”

Sneer. That’s pretty well indeed, sir.

Puff. Oh, cool!—quite cool!—to what I sometimes do.

Sneer. And do you think there are any who are influenced by this?

Puff. O lud, yes, sir! the number of those

Comedies.

who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed.

Sneer. Well, sir, the puff preliminary?

Puff. O, that, sir, does well in the form of a caution. In a matter of gallantry now—Sir Flimsy Gossamer wishes to be well with Lady Fanny Fete—he applies to me—I open trenches for him with a paragraph in the Morning Post.—“It is recommended to the beautiful and accomplished Lady F four stars F dash E to be on her guard against that dangerous character, Sir F dash G; who, however pleasing and insinuating his manners may be, is certainly not remarkable for the *constancy of his attachments!*” in italics. Here, you see, Sir Flimsy Gossamer is introduced to the particular notice of Lady Fanny, who perhaps never thought of him before—she finds herself publicly cautioned to avoid him, which naturally makes her desirous of seeing him; the observation of their acquaintance causes a pretty kind of mutual embarrassment; this produces a sort of sympathy of interest, which if Sir Flimsy is unable to improve effectually, he at least gains the credit of having their names mentioned together, by a particular set, and in a particular way—which nine times out of ten is the full accomplishment of modern gallantry.

Dang. Egad, Sneer, you will be quite an adept in the business.

Puff. Now, sir, that puff collateral is much

Sheridan.

used as an appendage to advertisements, and may take the form of anecdote.—“Yesterday, as the celebrated George Bonmot was sauntering down St. James’s Street, he met the lively Lady Mary Myrtle coming out of the park:—‘Good God, Lady Mary, I’m surprised to meet you in a white jacket,—for I expected never to have seen you, but in a full-trimmed uniform and a light horseman’s cap!’—‘Heavens, George, where could you have learned that?’—‘Why,’ replied the wit, ‘I just saw a print of you in a new publication called the Camp Magazine; which, by-the-by, is a devilish clever thing, and is sold at No. 3, on the right hand of the way, two doors from the printing-office, the corner of Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, price only one shilling.’”

Sneer. Very ingenious indeed!

Puff. But the puff collusive is the newest of any; for it acts in the disguise of determined hostility. It is much used by bold booksellers and enterprising poets—“An indignant correspondent observes that the new poem called *Beelzebub’s Cotillon*, or *Proserpine’s Fete Champetre*, is one of the most unjustifiable performances he ever read. The severity with which certain characters are handled is quite shocking: and as there are many descriptions in it too warmly colored for female delicacy, the shameful avidity with which this piece is bought by all people of

Comedies.

fashion is a reproach on the taste of the times, and a disgrace to the delicacy of the age." Here you see the two strongest inducements are held forth; first, that nobody ought to read it; and secondly, that everybody buys it: on the strength of which the publisher boldly prints the tenth edition, before he had sold ten of the first; and then establishes it by threatening himself with the pillory, or absolutely indicting himself for *scan. mag.*

Dang. Ha! ha! ha!—'gad, I know it is so.

Puff. As to the puff oblique, or puff by implication, it is too various and extensive to be illustrated by an instance; it attracts in titles and presumes in patents; it lurks in the limitation of a subscription, and invites in the assurance of crowd and incommodation at public places; it delights to draw forth concealed merit, with a most disinterested assiduity; and sometimes wears a countenance of smiling censure and tender reproach. It has a wonderful memory for parliamentary debates, and will often give the whole speech of a favored member with the most flattering accuracy. But, above all, it is a great dealer in reports and suppositions. It has the earliest intelligence of intended preferments that will reflect honor on the patrons; and embryo promotions of modest gentlemen, who know nothing of the matter themselves. It can hint a ribbon for implied services in the air of a common report; and with the

Sheridan.

carelessness of a casual paragraph, suggest officers into commands, to which they have no pretension but their wishes. This, sir, is the last principal class of the art of puffing—an art which I hope you will now agree with me is of the highest dignity, yielding a tab-lature of benevolence and public spirit; be-friending equally trade, gallantry, criticism, and politics; the applause of genius—the register of charity—the triumph of heroism—the self-defence of contractors—the fame of orators—and the gazette of ministers.

Sneer. Sir, I am completely a convert both to the importance and ingenuity of your pro-fession; and now, sir, there is but one thing which can possibly increase my respect for you, and that is, your permitting me to be present this morning at the rehearsal of your new tragedy—

Puff. Hush, for heaven's sake!—*My* traged-y!—Egad, Dangle, I take this very ill; you know how apprehensive I am of being known to be the author.

Dang. I'faith I would not have told—but it's in the papers, and your name at length in the Morning Chronicle.

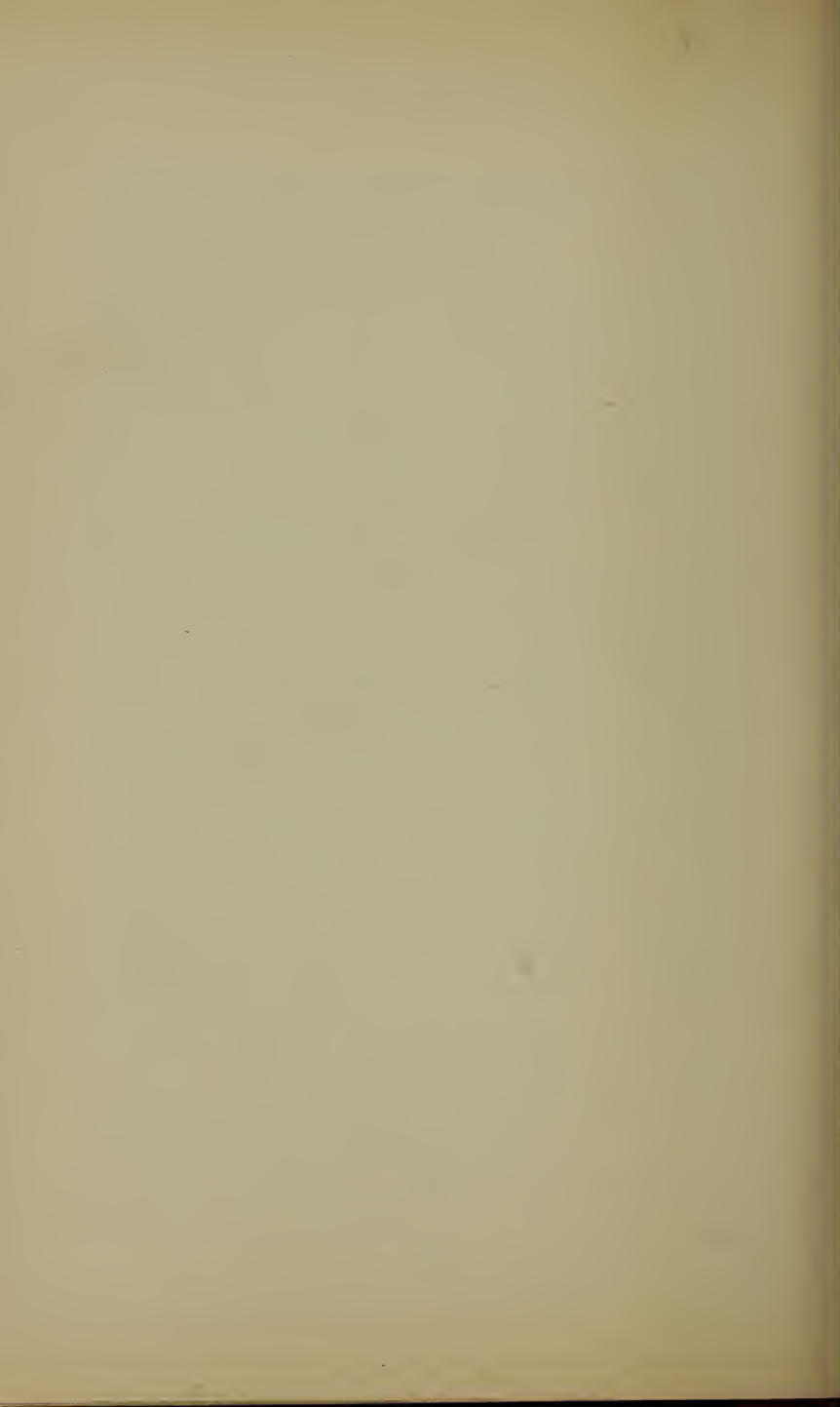
Puff. Ah! those damned editors never can keep a secret!—Well, Mr. Sneer, no doubt you will do me great honor—I shall be in-finitely happy—highly flattered—

Dang. I believe it must be near the time—shall we go together?

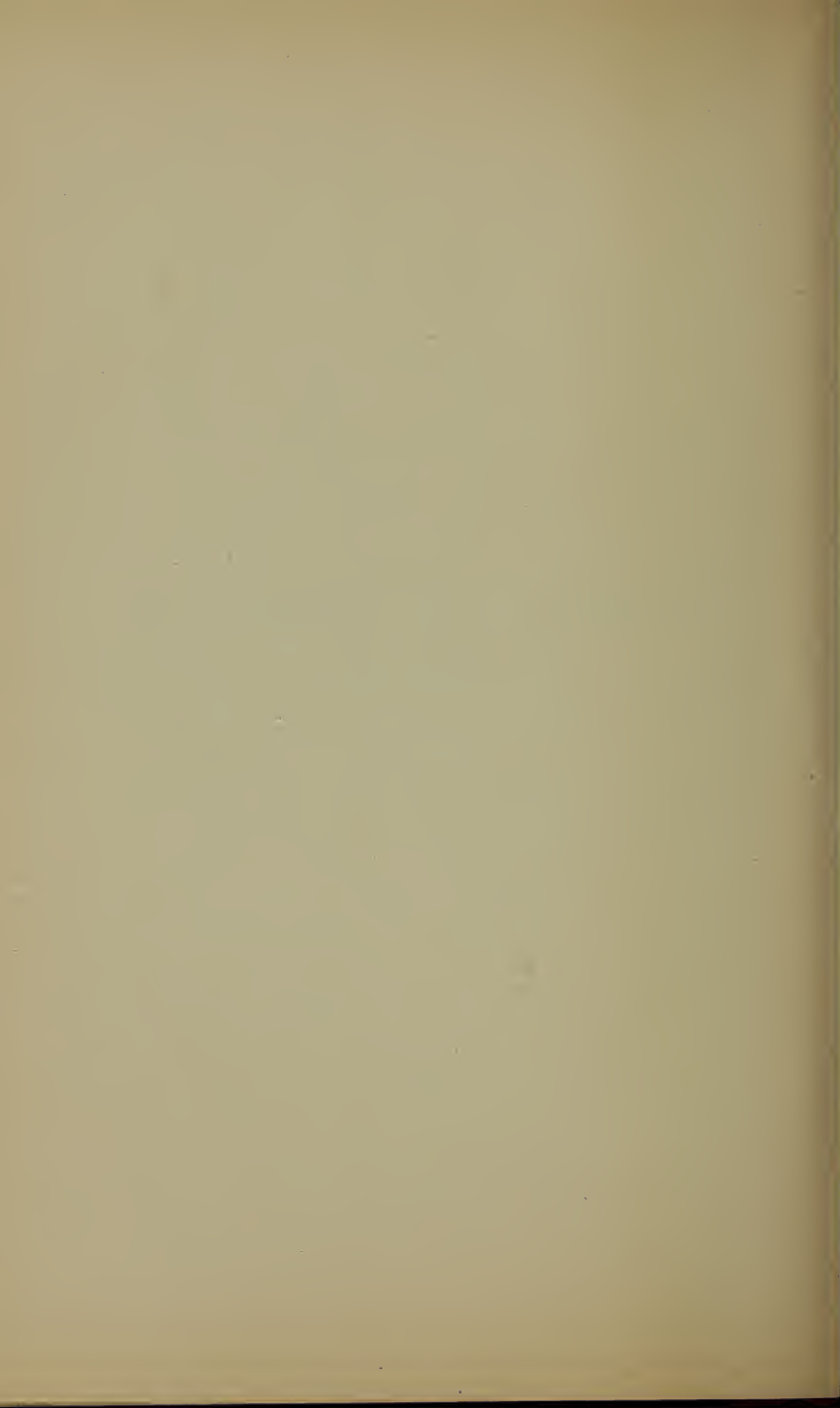
Comedies.

Puff. No; it will not be yet this hour, for they are always late at that theatre; besides, I must meet you there, for I have some little matters here to send to the papers, and a few paragraphs to scribble before I go—[*Looking at memorandums.*] Here is *A conscientious Baker, on the subject of the Army Bread*; and *A Detester of visible Brickwork, in favour of the new-invented Stucco*; both in the style of Junius, and promised for to-morrow. The Thames navigation too is at a stand. Miso-mud or Anti-shoal must go to work again directly.—Here too are some political memorandums—I see; ay—*To take Paul Jones, and get the Indiamen out of the Shannon—reinforce Byron—compel the Dutch to—so!*—I must do that in the evening papers, or reserve it for the Morning Herald; for I know that I have undertaken to-morrow, besides, to establish the unanimity of the fleet in the Public Advertiser, and to shoot Charles Fox in the Morning Post.—So, egad, I han't a moment to lose.

Dang. Well, we'll meet in the Green Room. [Exeunt severally.]



Verses to the Memory of
Garrick.



Verses to the Memory of Garrick.

*Spoken as a Monody, at the Theatre Royal
in Drury Lane.*

*If dying excellence deserves a tear,
If fond remembrance still is cherished here,
Can we persist to bid your sorrows flow
For fabled suff'ers and delusive woe?
Or with quaint smiles dismiss the plaintive
strain,*

*Point the quick jest—indulge the comic
vein—*

*Ere yet to buried Roscius we assign
One kind regret—one tributary line!*

*His fame requires we act a tenderer part:
His memory claims the tear you gave his art!
The general voice, the meed of mournful
verse,*

*The splendid sorrows that adorn'd his hearse,
The throng that mourn'd as their dead
favorite passed,*

*The graced respect that claim'd him to the
last,*

Sheridan.

*While Shakespeare's image from its hallow'd
base*

*Seem'd to prescribe the grave, and point the
place,—*

*Nor these—nor all the sad regrets that flow
From fond fidelity's domestic woe—*

*So much are Garrick's praise—so much his
due—*

As on this spot—one tear bestow'd by you.

*Amid the hearts which seek ingenious fame,
Our toil attempts the most precarious claim!
To him whose mimic pencil wins the prize,
Obedient Fame immortal wreaths supplies;
Whate'er of wonder Reynolds now may
raise,*

*Raphael still boasts contemporary praise:—
Each dazzling light and gaudier bloom sub-
dued,*

*With undiminish'd awe his works are view'd;
E'en Beauty's portrait wears a softer prime,
Touch'd by the tender hand of mellowing
Time.*

*The patient Sculptor owns an humbler part,
A ruder toil, and more mechanic art;
Content with slow and timorous stroke to
trace*

*The lingering line, and mould the tardy
grace;*

*But once achieved—though barbarous wreck
o'erthrow*

The sacred fane, and lay its glories low,

Verses to the Memory of Garrick.

*Yet shall the sculptured ruin rise to day,
Graced by defect, and worship'd in decay;
Th' enduring record bears the artist's name,
Demands his honors, and asserts his fame.*

*Superior hopes the Poët's bosom fire;
O proud distinction of the sacred lyre!
Wide as th' inspiring Phæbus darts his ray,
Diffusive splendor gilds his votary's lay.
Whether the song heroic woes rehearse,
With epic grandeur, and the pomp of verse;
Or, fondly gay, with unambitious guile,
Attempt no prize but favoring beauty's smile;
Or bear dejected to the lonely grove
The soft despair of unprevailing love—
Whate'er the theme—through every age and
clime*

*Congenial passions meet th' according rhyme;
The pride of glory—pity's sigh sincere—
Youth's earliest blush—and beauty's virgin
tear.*

*Such is their meed—their honors thus
secure,
Whose arts yield objects, and whose works
endure.*

*The Actor, only, shrinks from Time's award;
Feeble tradition is his memory's guard;
By whose faint breath his merits must abide,
Unvouch'd by proof—to substance unallied!
E'en matchless Garrick's art, to heaven re-
sign'd,
No fix'd effect, no model leaves behind!*

Sheridan.

*The grace of action—the adapted mien.
Faithful as nature to the varied scene;
Th' expressive glance—whose subtile comment draws
Entranced attention, and a mute applause;
Gesture that marks, with force and feeling
fraught,
A sense in silence, and a will in thought;
Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid
tone
Gives verse a music, scarce confess'd its own;
As light from gems assumes a brighter ray,
And clothed with orient hues, transcends the
day!
Passion's wild break—and frown that awes
the sense
And every charm of gentler eloquence—
All perishable! like th' electric fire,
But strike the frame—and as they strike
expire;
Incense too pure a bodied flame to bear,
Its fragrance charms the sense, and blends
with air.
Where then—while sunk in cold decay he
lies,
And pale eclipse for ever veils those eyes—
Where is the blest memorial that ensures
Our Garrick's fame?—whose is the trust?—
'Tis yours.
And O! by every charm his art assay'd
To soothe your cares!—by every grief allay'd!*

Verses to the Memory of Garrick.

*By the hush'd wonder which his accents drew!
By his last parting tear, repaid by you!*

*By all those thoughts, which many a distant
night*

*Shall mark his memory with a sad delight!
Still in your hearts' dear record bear his name;
Cherish the keen regret that lifts his fame;
To you it is bequeath'd—assert the trust,
And to his worth—'tis all you can—be just.*

*What more is due from sanctifying Time,
To cheerful wit, and many a favor'd rhyme,
O'er his graced urn shall bloom, a deathless
wreath,*

*Whose blossom'd sweets shall deck the mask
beneath.*

*For these—when Sculpture's votive toil shall
rear*

*The due memorial of a loss so dear—
O loveliest mourner, gentle Muse! be thine
The pleasing woe to guard the laurell'd shrine.
As Fancy, oft by Superstition led*

*To roam the mansions of the sainted dead,
Has view'd by shadowy eve's unfaithful gloom
A weeping cherub on a martyr's tomb—
So thou, sweet Muse, hang o'er his sculptured
bier*

*With patient woe, that loves the lingering
tear;*

*With thoughts that mourn—nor yet desire
relief;*

With meek regret, and fond enduring grief;

Sheridan.

*With looks that speak—He never shall
return!*

*Chilling thy tender bosom, clasp his urn;
And with soft sighs disperse th' irreverend
dust*

Which Time may strew upon his sacred bust.

Speeches.



Speeches.

ON THE FOURTH CHARGE AGAINST WARREN HASTINGS.

(This was a speech in favor of the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Esq., late Governor General of Bengal, on account of his conduct toward the Begum Princesses of Oude. Only a résumé of this great speech, which lasted five hours and forty minutes, can be produced here; but, as far as possible, we will give a faithful miniature of an unequalled original.)

After a short preamble, Sheridan continued by saying that the attention which Parliament had paid to the affairs of India for many sessions past, the voluminous productions of their committees on that subject, the various proceedings in that House respecting it, their own strong and pointed resolutions, the repeated recommendations of his Majesty, and their reiterated assurance of paying due regard to those recommendations, as well as various acts of the Legislature—were all of them undeniable proofs of the moment and

Sheridan.

magnitude of the consideration and incontrovertibly established this plain broad fact, that Parliament directly acknowledges that the British name and character had been dishonored and rendered detestable throughout India by the malversation and crimes of the principal servant of the East India Company. The fact having been established beyond all question by themselves, and by their own acts, there needed no argument on his part to induce the committee to see the importance of the subject about to be discussed upon that day, in a more striking point of view than they themselves had held it up to public observation.

There were, he knew, persons without doors who affected to ridicule the idea of prosecuting Mr. Hastings, and who, not inconsistently, redoubled their exertions in proportion as the prosecution became more serious, to increase their sarcasms upon the subject by asserting that Parliament might be more usefully employed, that there were matters of more immediate moment to engage their attention, that a commercial treaty with France had just been concluded, and that it was of a vast and comprehensive nature, and of itself sufficient to engross their attention.

To all this he would oppose these questions: Was Parliament misspending its time by inquiring into the oppressions practised on millions of unfortunate persons in India, and

Speeches.

endeavoring to bring the daring delinquent who had been guilty of the most flagrant acts of enormous tyranny and rapacious speculation to exemplary and condign punishment? Was it a misuse of their functions to be diligent in attempting by the most effectual means to wipe off the disgrace affixed to the British name in India, and to rescue the national character from lasting infamy? Surely no man who felt for one or the other would think a business of greater moment or magnitude could occupy his attention; or that the House could with too much steadiness, too ardent a zeal, or too industrious a perseverance, pursue its object.

Their conduct in this respect during the course of the preceding year had done them immortal honor, and proved to all the world that however degenerate an example of Englishmen *some* of the British subjects had exhibited in India, the people of England, collectively speaking, and acting by their representatives, felt—as men should feel on such an occasion—that they were anxious to do justice by redressing injuries and punishing offenders, however high their rank, however elevated their station.

Their indefatigable exertions in committees appointed to inquire concerning the affairs of India; their numerous elaborate and clear reports; their long and interesting debates; their solemn addresses to the throne; their

Sheridan.

rigorous legislative acts; their marked detestation of that novel and base sophism in the principles of judicial inquiry (constantly the language of the Governor-General's servile dependents); that crimes might be compounded, that the guilt of Mr. Hastings was to be balanced by his successes, that fortunate events were a full and complete set-off against a base system of oppression, corruption, breach of faith, speculation and treachery; and finally their solemn and awful judgment that, in the case of Benares, Mr. Hastings' conduct was a proper object of parliamentary impeachment, had covered them with applause, and brought them forward in the face of all the world as the objects of perpetual admiration.

Animated with the same zeal, the committee had by that memorable vote given a solemn pledge of their further intentions. They had said to India, "You shall no longer be reduced into temporary acquiescence by sending out a titled governor or a set of vaporeing resolutions; it is not with stars and ribands, and with all the badges of regal favor, that we atone to you for past delinquencies. No; you shall have the solid consolation of seeing an end to your grievances by an example of punishment for those that have already taken place."

The House had set up a beacon which, while it served to guide their own way, would also

Speeches.

make their motions conspicuous to the world which surrounded and beheld them. He had no doubt but in their manly determination they would go through the whole of the business with the same steadiness which gave such sterling brilliance of character to their outset. They might challenge the world to observe and judge of them by the result.

Impossible was it for such men to become improperly influenced by a paper bearing the signature of "Warren Hastings," and put not many minutes before into their hands, as well as his own, on their entrance into the House. This insidious paper he felt himself at liberty to consider as a second defence and a second answer to the charge he was about to bring forward—a charge replete with proof of criminality of the blackest dye, of tyranny the most vile and premeditated, of corruption the most open and shameless, of oppression the most severe and grinding, of cruelty the most unmanly and unparalleled. But he was far from meaning to rest the charge on assertion, or on any warm expressions which the impulse of wounded feelings might produce. He would establish every part of the charge by the most unanswerable proof, and the most unquestionable evidence; and the witness he would bring forth to support every fact he would state should be, for the most part, one whom no man would venture to contradict, Warren Hastings himself; yet this character

Sheridan.

had friends, nor were they blamable. They might believe him guiltless because he asserted his integrity. Even the partial warmth of friendship, and the emotions of a good, admiring, and unsuspecting heart, might not only carry them to such lengths, but incite them to rise with an intrepid confidence in his vindication. Again would he repeat that the vote of the last session, wherein the conduct of this pillar of India, this corner-stone of our strength in the East, this talisman of the British territories in Asia was censured, did the greatest honor to this House, as it must be the forerunner of speedy justice on *that* character, which was said to be above censure, and whose conduct we were given to understand was not within the reach even of suspicion, but whose deeds were indeed such as no difficulties, no necessity could justify; for where is the situation, however elevated, and in that elevation however embarrassed, that can authorize the wilful commission of oppression and rapacity? If, at any period, a point arose on which inquiry had been full, deliberate, and dispassionate, it was the present. There were questions on which party conviction was supposed to be a matter of easy acquisition; and if this inquiry were to be considered merely as a matter of party, he should regard it as very trifling indeed; but he professed to God that he felt in his own bosom the strongest personal conviction, and

Speeches.

he was sensible that many other gentlemen did the same. It was on that conviction that he believed the conduct of Mr. Hastings, in regard to the Nabob of Oude and the Begums, comprehended every species of human offence. He had proved himself guilty of rapacity at once violent and insatiable—of treachery cool and premeditated—of oppression useless and unprovoked—of breach of faith unwarrantable and base—of cruelty unmanly and unmerciful. These were the crimes of which, in his soul and conscience, he arraigned Warren Hastings, and of which he had the confidence to say he should convict him. As there were gentlemen ready to stand up his advocates, he challenged them to watch if he advanced one inch of assertion for which he had not solid ground; for he trusted nothing to declamation. He desired credit for no fact which he did not prove, and which he did not indeed demonstrate beyond the possibility of refutation. He should not desert the clear and invincible ground of truth throughout any one particle of his allegations against Mr. Hastings, who uniformly aimed to govern India by his own arbitrary power, covering with misery upon misery a wretched people whom Providence had subjected to the dominion of this country; while in the defence of Mr. Hastings, not one single circumstance grounded upon truth was stated. He would repeat the words, and gentlemen might take

Sheridan.

them down. The attempt at vindication was false throughout.

Sheridan, now pursuing the examination of Mr. Hastings' defence, observed that there could not exist a single plea for maintaining that that defence against the particular charge now before the committee was hasty; Mr. Hastings had had sufficient time to make it up; and the committee saw that he thought fit to go back as far as the year 1775, for pretended ground of justification from the charge of violence and rapacity. Sheridan here read a variety of extracts from the defence, which stated the various steps taken by Mr. Bristow in 1775 and 1776, to procure from the Begums aid to the Nabob. Not one of these facts, as stated by Mr. Hastings, was true; groundless, nugatory and insulting were the affirmations of Mr. Hastings, that the seizure of treasures from the Begums, and the exposition of their pilfered goods to public auction (unparalleled acts of open injustice, oppression, and inhumanity!), were in any degree to be defended by those encroachments on their property which had taken place previous to his administration, or by those sales which they themselves had solicited as a favorable mode of supplying a part of their aid to the Nabob. The relation of a series of plain, indisputable facts would irrevocably overthrow a subterfuge so pitiful, a distinction so ridiculous. It must be remembered, that

Speeches.

at that period, the Begums did not merely desire, but they most expressly stipulated, that of the thirty lacs promised, eleven should be paid in sundry articles of manufacture. Was it not obvious, therefore, that the sale of goods, in the first place, far from partaking of the nature of an act of plunder, became an extension of relief, of indulgence, and of accommodation? But, however, he would not be content, like Mr. Hastings, with barely making assertions, or when made against his statement, with barely denying them; on the contrary, whenever he objected to a single statement, he would bring his refutation, and almost in every instance Mr. Hastings himself should be his witness.

Then Mr. Sheridan from a variety of documents, chiefly from the minutes of the Supreme Council, of which Mr. Hastings had been the president, explained the true state of that question. Treasure, which was the source of all cruelties, was the original pretence which Mr. Hastings had made to the Company for the proceeding, and through the whole of his conduct he had alleged the principles of Mahometanism in mitigation of the severities he had sanctioned; as if he meant to insinuate that there was something in Mahometanism which rendered it impious in a son not to plunder his mother.

Sheridan, in a regular progression of evidence, proceeded to state the successive peri-

Sheridan.

ods, and finally to bring down the immediate subject in question to the day on which Mr. Hastings embraced the project of plundering the Begums; and to justify which he had exhibited in his defence four charges against them, as the grounds and motives of his own conduct: "1. That they had given disturbance at all times to the government of the Nabob, and that they had long manifested a spirit hostile to his and to the English Government; 2. That they excited the Zemindars to revolt at the time of the insurrection at Benares and of the resumption of the Jaghires; 3. That they resisted by armed force the resumption of their own Jaghires; and 4. That they excited and were accessory to the insurrection at Benares." To each of these charges Mr. Sheridan gave distinct and separate answers. First, on the subject of the imputed disturbances, which they were falsely said to have occasioned, he could produce a variety of extracts, many of them written by Mr. Hastings himself, to prove that, on the contrary, they had particularly distinguished themselves by their friendship for the English, and the various good offices which they had rendered the Government. Mr. Hastings left Calcutta in 1781, and proceeded to Lucknow, as he said himself, with two great objects in his mind, namely, Benares and Oude. What was the nature of these boasted resources? That he should plunder one or both; the equitable al-

Speeches

ternative of a highwayman, who in going forth in the evening hesitates which of his resources to prefer, Bagshot or Hounslow. In such a state of generous irresolution did Mr. Hastings proceed to Benares and Oude. At Benares he failed in his pecuniary object. Then, and not till then—not on account of any ancient enmities shown by the Begums—not in resentment for any old disturbances, but because he had failed in one place, and had but two in his prospect, did he conceive the base expedient of plundering these aged women. He had no pretence—he had no excuse—he had nothing but the arrogant and obstinate determination to govern India by his own corrupt will to plead for his conduct. Inflamed by disappointment in his first project, he hastened to the fortress of Chunar, to meditate the more atrocious design of instigating a son against his mother, of sacrificing female dignity and distress to parricide and plunder. At Chunar was that infamous treaty concerted with the Nabob Vizier to despoil the princesses of Oude of their hereditary possessions. There it was that Mr. Hastings had stipulated with one whom he called an independent prince, “that, as great distress has arisen to the Nabob’s government from the military power and dominion assumed by the Jaghiredars, he be permitted to resume such as he may find necessary; with a reserve that all such for the amount of whose Jaghires the

Sheridan.

Company are guarantees shall, in case of the resumptions of their lands, be paid the amount of their net collections, through the resident, in ready money; and that no English resident be appointed to Furruckabad."

No sooner was this foundation of iniquity thus instantly established, in violation of the pledged faith and solemn guarantee of the British Government; no sooner had Mr. Hastings determined to invade the substance of justice, than he resolved to avail himself of her judicial forms, and accordingly dispatched a messenger for the Chief Justice of India, to assist him in perpetrating the violations he had projected. Sir Elijah Impey being arrived, Mr. Hastings with much art proposed a question of opinion, involving an unsubstantiated fact, in order to obtain a surreptitious approbation of the measure he had predetermined to adopt: "The Begums being in open revolt, might not the Nabob confiscate their property?" "Most undoubtedly," was the ready answer of the friendly judge. Not a syllable of inquiry intervened as to the existence of the imputed rebellion, nor a moment's pause as to the ill purposes to which the decision of a chief justice might be perverted.

Thus, while the executive power in India was perverted to the most disgraceful inhumanities, the judicial authority also became its close and confidential associate—at the same moment that the sword of government was

Speeches.

turned to an assassin's dagger, the pure ermine of justice was stained and soiled with the basest and meanest contamination.

Under such circumstances did Mr. Hastings complete the treaty of Chunar—a treaty which might challenge all the treaties that ever subsisted. for containing in the smallest compass the most extensive treachery. Mr. Hastings did not conclude that treaty till he had received from the Nabob a present, or rather a bribe, of £100,000. The circumstances of this present were as extraordinary as the thing itself. Four months afterwards, and not till then, Mr. Hastings communicated the matter to the Company. Unfortunately for himself, however, this tardy disclosure was conveyed in words which betray his original meaning; for, with no common incaution, he admits the present “was of a magnitude not to be concealed.”

Sheridan stated all the circumstances of this bribe, and averred that the whole had its rise in a principle of rank corruption. For what was the consideration of this extraordinary bribe? No less than the withdrawing from Oude, not only of all the English gentlemen in official situations, but the whole of the English army; and that, too, at the very moment when he himself had stated the whole country of Oude to be in open revolt and rebellion. Other very strange articles were contained in the same treaty, which nothing but this infamous

Sheridan.

bribe could have occasioned, together with the reverse which he had in his own mind of treachery to the Nabob; for the only part of the treaty which he ever attempted to carry into execution was to withdraw the English gentlemen from Oude. The Nabob, indeed, considered this as essential to his deliverance, and his observation on the circumstance was curious—"for though Major Palmer," said he, "has not yet asked anything, I observe it is the custom of the English gentlemen constantly to ask for something from me before they go." This imputation on the English Mr. Hastings was most ready to countenance as a screen for his own abandoned profligacy; and, therefore, at the very moment that he pocketed the extorted spoils of the Nabob, with his usual grave hypocrisy and cant, "Go," he said to the English gentlemen, "go, you oppressive rascals, go from this worthy unhappy man whom you have plundered, and leave him to my protection. You have robbed him, you have plundered him, you have taken advantage of his accumulated distresses; but, please God, he shall in future be at rest, for I have promised him he shall never see the face of an Englishman again." This, however, was the only part of the treaty which he ever affected to fulfil; and, in all its other parts, we learn from himself, that at the very moment he made it, he intended to deceive the Nabob; and, accordingly, he advised general instead of partial resump-

Speeches.

tion, for the express purpose of defeating the first views of the Nabob, and, instead of giving instant and unqualified assent to all the articles of the treaty, he perpetually qualified, explained, and varied them with new diminutions and reservations. Sheridan called upon gentlemen to say, if there is any theory in Machiavel, any treachery upon record, that could equal this monstrous iniquity, if they had ever heard of any cold Italian fraud which could in any degree be put in comparison with the disgusting hypocrisy and unequalled baseness which Mr. Hastings had shown on that occasion.

After having stated this complicated infamy in terms of the severest reprehension, Sheridan proceeded to observe, that he recollected to have heard it advanced by some of those admirers of Mr. Hastings, who were not so implicit as to give unqualified applause to his crimes; that they found an apology for the atrocity of them in the greatness of his mind. To estimate the solidity of such a defence, it would be sufficient merely to consider in what consisted this prepossessing distinction, this captivating characteristic of greatness of mind! Is it not solely to be traced in great actions directed to great ends? In them, and them alone, we are to search for true magnanimity; to them only can we justly affix the splendid title and honors of real greatness. There was, indeed, another species of great-

Sheridan.

ness, which displayed itself in boldly conceiving a bad measure, and undauntedly pursuing it to its accomplishment. But had Mr. Hastings the merit of exhibiting either of these descriptions of greatness, even of the latter? He saw nothing great, nothing magnanimous, nothing open, nothing direct in his measures, or in his mind. On the contrary, he had too often pursued the worst objects by the worst means. His course was an eternal deviation from rectitude. He either tyrannized or deceived, and was by turns a Dionysius and a Scapin. As well might the writhing obliquity of the serpent be compared to the swift directness of the arrow, as the duplicity of Mr. Hastings' ambition to the simple steadiness of true magnanimity. In his mind all was shuffling, ambiguous, dark, insidious and little; nothing simple, nothing unmixed; all affected plainness, and actual dissimulation. A heterogeneous mass of contradictory qualities; with nothing great but his crimes; and even those contrasted by the littleness of his motives, which at once denoted both his baseness and his meanness, and marked him for a traitor and a trickster: nay, in his style and writing, there was the same mixture of vicious contrarieties. The most grovelling ideas he conveyed in the most inflated language, giving mock consequence to low cavils, and uttering quibbles in heroics; so that his compositions disgusted the mind's taste as much as his actions excited the

Speeches.

soul's abhorrence. Indeed, this mixture of character seemed by some unaccountable, but inherent quality, to be appropriated, though in inferior degrees, to everything that concerned his employers. He remembered to have heard an honorable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) remark, that there was something in the first frame and constitution of the Company, which extended the sordid principles of their origin over all their successive operations, connecting with their civil policy, and even with their boldest achievements, the meanness of a pedlar and the profligacy of pirates. Alike in the political and military line could be observed auctioneering ambassadors and trading generals: and thus we saw a revolution brought about by affidavits! an army employed in executing an arrest! a town besieged on a note of hand! a prince dethroned for the balance of an account! Thus it was they exhibited a government, which united the mock majesty of a bloody sceptre and the little traffic of a merchant's counting-house—wielding a truncheon with one hand, and picking a pocket with the other.

Having painted the loose quality of the affidavits, which had been offered to excuse Mr. Hastings, on the ground of the treachery and cruelty of the Begums, Sheridan said that he must pause a moment, and particularly address himself to one description of gentlemen—those of the

Sheridan.

learned profession — within those walls. They saw that that House was the path to fortune in their profession—that they might soon expect that some of them were to be called to a dignified situation, where the great and important trust would be reposed in them of protecting the lives and fortunes of their fellow subjects. One learned gentleman in particular (Sir Lloyd Kenyon), if rumor spoke right, might suddenly be called to succeed that great and venerable character who long had shone the brightest luminary of his profession, whose pure and steady light was clear even to its latest moment, but whose last beam must now too soon be extinguished. He would ask the supposed successor of Lord Mansfield calmly to reflect on these extraordinary depositions, and solemnly to declare whether the mass of affidavits taken at Lucknow would be received by him as evidence to convict the lowest subject in this country. If he said it would, he declared to God he would sit down, and not add a syllable more to the too long trespass he had made on the patience of the committee.

Sheridan went further into the exposure of the evidence, into the comparison of dates, and the subsequent circumstances, in order to prove that all the enormous consequences which followed from the resumption, in the captivity of the women, and the imprisonment

Speeches.

and cruelties practised on their people, were solely to be imputed to Mr. Hastings.

Sheridan said he trusted that the House would vindicate the insulted character of justice; that they would demonstrate its true quality, essence, and purposes—that they would prove it to be, in the case of Mr. Hastings, active, inquisitive and avenging.

Sheridan remarked that he had heard of factions and parties in that House, and knew they existed. There was scarcely a subject upon which they were not broken and divided into sects. The prerogative of the Crown found its advocates among the representatives of the people. The privileges of the people found opponents even in the House of Commons itself. Habits, connections, parties, all led to diversity of opinion. But when inhumanity presented itself to their observation, it found no division among them; they attacked it as their common enemy, and, as if the character of this land was involved in their zeal for its ruin, they left it not till it was completely overthrown. It was not given to that House to behold the objects of their compassion and benevolence in the present extensive consideration, as it was to the officers who relieved and who so feelingly describe the ecstatic emotions of gratitude in the instant of deliverance; they could not behold the workings of the hearts, the quivering lips, the trickling tears, the loud and yet tremulous joy of the

Sheridan.

millions whom their vote of this night would for ever save from the cruelty of corrupted power; but, though they could not directly see the effect, was not the true enjoyment of their benevolence increased by the blessing being conferred unseen? Would not the omnipotence of Britain be demonstrated to the wonder of nations, by stretching its mighty arm across the deep, and saving by its fiat distant millions from destruction? And would the blessings of the people thus saved dissipate in empty air? "No! If I may dare" (said Sheridan) "to use the figure, we shall constitute Heaven itself our proxy, to receive for us the blessings of their pious gratitude and the prayers of their thanksgiving. It is with confidence, therefore, sir, that I move you on this charge—that Warren Hastings, Esq., be impeached."

THE BEGUM SPEECH.

(This was the popular title given to the speech to support the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Esq., on the second charge with regard to his conduct toward the Begum princesses of Oude. This speech occupied nearly three days. It would be impossible of course, to give the whole of it, but some of the most remarkable passages have been selected.)

In the course of his exordium, after insisting upon the great importance of the inquiry, and disclaiming on behalf of himself and his brother-managers any feeling of personal malice against the defendant, or any motive but that of vindicating the honor of the British name in India, and punishing those whose inhumanity and injustice had disgraced it, Sheridan proceeded to conciliate the court by a warm tribute to the purity of English justice.

“However, when I have said this, I trust your lordships will not believe that, because something is necessary to retrieve the British character, we call for an example to be made, without due and solid proof of the guilt of the person whom we pursue: no, my lords, we

Sheridan.

know well that it is the glory of this Constitution, that not the general fame or character of any man—not the weight or power of any prosecutor—no plea of moral or political expediency—not even the secret consciousness of guilt, which may live in the bosom of the judge, can justify any British court in passing any sentence, to touch a hair of the head, or an atom, in any respect, of the property, of the fame, of the liberty of the poorest or meanest subject that breathes the air of this just and free land. We know, my lords, that there can be no legal guilt without legal proof, and that the rule which defines the evidence is as much the law of the land as that which creates the crime. It is upon that ground we mean to stand.”

Sheridan thus described the feelings of the people of the East with respect to the unapproachable sanctity of their Zenanas:—

“It is too much, I am afraid, the case, that persons used to European manners do not take up these sort of considerations at first with the seriousness that is necessary. For your lordships cannot even learn the right nature of those people’s feelings and prejudices from any history of other Mahometan countries, not even from that of the Turks, for they are a mean and degraded race in comparison with many of these great families, who, inheriting from their Persian ancestors, preserve a purer style of prejudice and a loftier superstition.

Speeches.

Women are not as in Turkey, they neither go to the mosque nor to the bath—it is not the thin veil alone that hides them—but in the inmost recesses of their zenana they are kept from public view by those revered and protected walls, which, as Mr. Hastings and Sir Elijah Impey admit, are held sacred even by the ruffian hand of war, or by the more uncourteous hand of law. But in this situation, they are not confined from a mean and selfish policy of man—not from a coarse and sensual jealousy—enshrined rather than immured, their habitation and retreat is a sanctuary, not a prison—their jealousy is their own—a jealousy of their own honor, that leads them to regard liberty as a degradation, and the gaze of even admiring eyes as inexpiable pollution to the purity of their fame and the sanctity of their honor.

“Such being the general opinion (or prejudices let them be called) of this country, your Lordships will find that whatever treasures were given or lodged in a zenana of this description must, upon the evidence of the thing itself, be placed beyond the reach of resumption. To dispute with the counsel about the original right to those treasures, to talk of a title to them by the Mahometan law! their title to them is the title of a saint to the relics upon an altar, placed there by Piety, guarded by holy supersition, and to be snatched from thence only by sacrilege.”

Sheridan.

With regard to the pretended rebellion, which was conjured up by Mr. Hastings to justify the robbery of his relations by the Nabob, he said :

“The fact is, that through all his defences—through all his various false suggestions—through all these various rebellions and disaffections, Mr. Hastings never once lets go this plea of unextinguishable right in the Nabob. He constantly represents the seizing of the treasure as a resumption of a right which he could not part with; as if there were literally something in the Koran that made it criminal in a true Mussulman to keep his engagements with his relations, and impious in a son to abstain from plundering a mother. I do gravely assure your lordships that there is no such doctrine in the Koran, and no such principle makes a part in the civil or municipal jurisprudence of that country. Even after these princesses had been endeavoring to dethrone the Nabob and to extirpate the English, the only plea the Nabob ever makes, is his right under the Mahometan law; and the truth is, he appears never to have heard any other reason, and I pledge myself to make it appear to your lordships, however extraordinary it may be that not only had the Nabob never heard of the rebellion till the moment of seizing the palace, but, still further, that he never heard of it at all; that this extraordinary rebellion, which was as notorious as the rebellion of 1745 in

Speeches.

London, was carefully concealed from those two parties—the Begums who plotted it, and the Nabob who was to be the victim of it.

“The existence of this rebellion was not the secret, but the notoriety of it was the secret; it was a rebellion which had for its object the destruction of no human creature but those who planned it; it was a rebellion which, according to Mr. Middleton’s expression, no man, either horse or foot, ever marched to quell. The Chief Justice was the only man who took the field against it, the force against which it was raised, instantly withdrew to give it elbow-room; and even then it was a rebellion which perversely showed itself in acts of hospitality to the Nabob whom it was to dethrone, and to the English whom it was to extirpate; it was a rebellion plotted by two feeble old women, headed by two eunuchs, and suppressed by an affidavit.”

The conduct of Sir Elijah Impey, reference to whom has been made in the other speech against Warren Hastings, could not be allowed to pass without censure. On this subject, Sheridan said: “I will not question his feebleness of memory, nor dispute in any respect the doctrine he had set up, *that which it was likely he should have done, he took for granted he had done*—but conceding this, I must be permitted to suspect that what he should have done, he really had not done—and this I conceive to be perfectly

Sheridan.

fair reasoning. It is not likely that he should propose to go to Fyzabad, which was considerably out of his way, at the moment the rebellion was said to rage there. Sir Elijah has admitted that, in giving his evidence, he has never answered without looking equally to the probability and the consequences of the fact in question. Sometimes he has even admitted circumstances of which he has no recollection, beyond the mere probability that they had taken place. By consulting what was probable and the contrary, he may certainly have corrected his memory at times, and I will accept that mode of giving testimony provided that the inverse of the proposition may have place; and that where a circumstance is improbable a similar degree of improbability may be subtracted from the testimony of the witness. Five times in the House of Commons and twice in that court has Sir Elijah Impey sworn that a rebellion was raging at Fyzabad, at the time of his journey to Lucknow. Yet on the eighth examination he has contradicted all the former, and declared that what he meant was, that the rebellion *had been* raging and that the country was then restored to quiet. Thus he ignores the letter he received from Mr. Hastings informing him that the rebellion was quelled, and, also, his own proposition of traveling through Fyzabad to Lucknow."

After pointing out the various methods by

Speeches.

which it had been attempted, but in vain, to make the public believe in the fiction of a rebellion, Sheridan then described the desolation brought upon some provinces of Oude by the misgovernment of Colonel Hannay, and the insurrection at Gurrackpore against him in consequence.

“If we could suppose a person to have come suddenly into the country, unacquainted with any circumstances that had passed since the days of Sujah-ul-Dowlah, he would naturally ask—What cruel hand has wrought this wide desolation, what barbarian foe has invaded the country, has desolated its fields, depopulated its villages? He would ask, What disputed succession, civil rage, or frenzy of the inhabitants had induced them to act in hostility to the words of God, and the beautiful works of man? He would ask, What religious zeal or frenzy had added to the mad despair and horrors of war? The ruin is unlike anything that appears recorded in any age; it looks like neither the barbarities of men, nor the judgments of vindictive Heaven. There is a waste of desolation, as if caused by fell destroyers, never meaning to return and making but a short period of their rapacity. It looks as if some fabled monster had made its passage through the country, whose pestiferous breath had blasted more than its voracious appetite could devour.

“If there had been any men in the country,

Sheridan.

who had not their hearts and souls so subdued by fear, as to refuse to speak the truth at all upon such a subject, they would have told him, there had been no war since the time of Sujah-Dowlah,—tyrant, indeed, as he was, but then deeply regretted by his subjects—that no hostile blow of any enemy had been struck in that land—that there had been no disputed succession—no civil war—no religious frenzy,—but that these were the tokens of British friendship, the marks left by the embraces of British allies—more dreadful than the blows of the bitterest enemy. They would tell him that these allies had converted a prince into a slave, to make him the principal in the extortion upon his subjects;—that their rapacity increased in proportion as the means of supplying their avarice diminished; that they made the sovereign pay as if they had a right to an increased price, because the labor of extortion and plunder increased. To such causes, they would tell him, these calamities were owing.

“Need I refer your lordships to the strong testimony of Major Naylor when he rescued Colonel Hannay from their hands—where you see that this people, born to submission and bent to most abject subjection—that even they, in whose meek hearts injury had never yet begot resentment, nor even despair bred courage—that *their* hatred, *their* abhorrence of Colonel Hannay was such that they clung round him by thousands and thousands;—that when

Speeches.

Major Naylor rescued him, they refused life from the hand that could rescue Hannay;—that they nourished this desperate consolation, that by their death they should at least thin the number of wretches who suffered by his devastation and extortion. He says that, when he crossed the river, he found the poor wretches, quivering upon the parched banks of the polluted river, encouraging their blood to flow, and consoling themselves with the thought, that it would not sink into the earth, but rise to the common God of humanity, and cry aloud for vengeance on their destroyers! This warm description—which is no declamation of mine, but founded in actual fact, and in fair, clear proof before your lordships—speaks powerfully what the cause of these oppressions were, and the perfect justness of those feelings that were occasioned by them. And yet, my lords, I am asked to prove *why* these people arose in such concert:—‘There must have been machinations, forsooth, and the Begums’ machinations to produce all this!’ Why did they rise? Because they were people in human shape; because patience under the detested tyranny of man is rebellion to the sovereignty of God; because allegiance to that Power that gives us the *forms* of men commands us to maintain the *rights* of men. And never yet was this truth dismissed from the human heart—never in any time, in any age—never in any clime, where rude man ever had

Sheridan.

any social feeling, or where corrupt refinement had subdued all feelings,—never was this one unextinguishable truth destroyed from the heart of man, placed, as it is, in the core and centre of it by his Maker, that man was not made the property of man; that human power is a trust for human benefit; and that when it is abused, revenge becomes justice, if not the bounden duty of the injured. These, my lords, were the causes why these people rose.”

Another passage is remarkable, as exhibiting a sort of tourney of intellect between Sheridan and Bourke. Mr. Bourke had, in opening the prosecution, remarked that prudence is a quality incompatible with vice, and can never be effectively enlisted in its cause:—“I never,” he said, “knew a man who was bad, fit for *service* that was good. There is always some disqualifying ingredient, mixing and spoiling the compound. The man seems paralytic on that side; his muscles there have lost their very tone and character; they cannot move. In short, the accomplishment of anything good is a physical impossibility for such a man. There is decrepitude as well as distortion: he could not, if he would, is not more certain than that he would not, if he could.” To this sentiment the allusions in the following passage refer:

“I am perfectly convinced that there is one idea which must arise in your lordships’ minds as a subject of wonder—how a person of Mr.

Speeches.

Hastings' reputed abilities can furnish such matter of accusation against himself. For it must be admitted that never was there a person who seems to go so rashly to work, with such an arrogant appearance of contempt for all conclusions, that may be deduced from what he advances upon the subject. When he seems most earnest and laborious to defend himself, it appears as if he had but one idea uppermost in his mind—a determination not to care what he says, provided he keeps clear of that. He knows that truth must convict him, and concludes, *à converso*, that falsehood will acquit him; forgetting that there must be some connection, some system, some co-operation, or otherwise his host of falsities fall without an enemy, self-discomfited and destroyed. But of this he never seems to have had the slightest apprehension. He falls to work, an artificer of fraud, against all the rules of architecture: he lays his ornamental work first, and his massy foundation at the top of it; and thus his whole building tumbles upon his head. Other people look well to their ground, choose their position, and watch whether they are likely to be surprised there; but he, as if in the ostentation of his heart, builds upon a precipice, and encamps upon a mine from choice. He seems to have no one actuating principle, but a steady, persevering resolution not to speak the truth nor to tell the fact.

Sheridan.

“It is impossible almost to treat conduct of this kind with perfect seriousness; yet I am aware that it ought to be more seriously accounted for—because I am sure it has been a sort of paradox, which must have struck your lordships, how any person having so many motives to conceal—having so many reasons to dread detection—should yet go to work so clumsily upon the subject. It is possible, indeed, that it may raise this doubt—whether such a person is of sound mind enough to be a proper object of punishment; or at least it may give a kind of confused notion, that the guilt cannot be of so deep and black a grain, over which such a thin veil was thrown, and so little trouble taken to avoid detection. I am aware that, to account for this seeming paradox, historians, poets, and even philosophers—at least of ancient times—have adopted the superstitious solution of the vulgar, and said that the gods deprive men of reason whom they devote to destruction or to punishment. But to unassuming or unprejudiced reason, there is no need to resort to any supposed supernatural interference; for the solution will be found in the eternal rules that formed the mind of man, and gave a quality and nature to every passion that inhabits it.

“An honorable friend of mine, who is now, I believe, near me—a gentleman to whom I never can on any occasion refer without feelings of respect, and, on this subject, without

Speeches.

feelings of the most grateful homage—a gentleman whose abilities upon this occasion, as upon some former ones, happily for the glory of the age in which we live, are not entrusted merely to the perishable eloquence of the day, but will live to be the admiration of that hour when all of us are mute, and most of us forgotten—that honorable gentleman has told you that prudence, the first of virtues, never can be used in the cause of vice. If, reluctant and diffident, I might take such a liberty, I should express a doubt whether experience, observation, or history, will warrant us in fully assenting to this observation. It is a noble and a lovely sentiment, my lords, worthy the mind of him who uttered it, worthy that proud disdain, that generous scorn of the means and instruments of vice which virtue and genius must ever feel. But I should doubt whether we can read the history of a Philip of Macedon, a Cæsar, or a Cromwell, without confessing that there have been evil purposes, baneful to the peace and to the rights of men, conducted—if I may not say with prudence or with wisdom—yet with awful craft and most successful and commanding subtlety. If, however, I might make a distinction, I should say that it is the proud attempt to mix a *variety* of lordly crimes, that unsettles the prudence of the mind, and breeds this distraction of the brain. *One* master-passion, domineering in the breast, may win

Sheridan.

the faculties of the understanding to advance its purpose, and to direct to that object everything that thought or human knowledge can effect; but, to succeed, it must maintain a solitary despotism in the mind—each rival profligacy must stand aloof, or wait in abject vassalage upon its throne. For the Power that has not forbade the entrance of evil passions into man's mind has, at least, forbade their union; if they meet they defeat their object, and their conquest, or their attempts at it, is tumult. Turn to the virtues—how different the decree! Formed to connect, to blend, to associate, and to co-operate; bearing the same course, with kindred energies and harmonious sympathy, each perfect in its own lovely sphere, each moving in its wider or more contracted orbit, with different but concentring powers, guided by the same influence of reason, and endeavoring at the same blessed end—the happiness of the individual, the harmony of the species, and the glory of the Creator. In the vices, on the other hand, it is the discord that insures the defeat: each clamors to be heard in its own barbarous language; each claims the exclusive cunning of the brain; each thwarts and reproaches the other; and even while their fell rage assails with common hate the peace and virtue of the world, the civil war among their own tumultuous legions defeats the purpose of the foul conspiracy. These are the Furies of

Speeches.

the mind, my lords, that unsettle the understanding; these are the Furies that destroy the virtue, Prudence; while the distracted brain and shivered intellect proclaim the tumult that is within, and bear their testimonies from the mouth of God Himself to the foul condition of the heart."

The two following passages should certainly be quoted. Having censured Hastings for having forced the Nabob to plunder his own relatives and friends, Sheridan said:

"I do say, that if you search the history of the world, you will not find an act of tyranny and fraud to surpass this; if you read all past histories, peruse the Annals of Tacitus, read the luminous page of Gibbon, and all the ancient or modern writers, that have searched into the depravity of former ages to draw a lesson for the present, you will not find an act of treacherous, deliberate, cool cruelty that could exceed this."

On being asked by some honest brother Whig, at the conclusion of the speech, how he came to compliment Gibbon with the epithet "luminous," Sheridan answered, in a half-whisper, "I said '*voluminous*.'"

Again he said:

"This is the character of all the protection ever afforded to the allies of Britain under the government of Mr. Hastings. They send their troops to drain the produce of industry, to seize all the treasures, wealth, and prosperity

Sheridan.

of the country, and then they call it Protection!—it is the protection of the vulture to the lamb.”

The following is his celebrated delineation of filial affection, which is better known perhaps than any other part of this speech:

“When I see in many of these letters the infirmities of age made a subject of mockery and ridicule; when I see the feelings of a son treated by Mr. Middleton as puerile and contemptible; when I see an order given from Mr. Hastings to harden that son’s heart, to choke the struggling nature in his bosom; when I see them pointing to the son’s name and to his standard, while marching to oppress the mother, as to a banner that gives dignity, that gives a holy sanction and a reverence to their enterprise; when I see and hear these things done—when I hear them brought into three deliberate Defences set up against the Charges of the Commons—my lords, I own I grow puzzled and confounded, and almost begin to doubt, whether, where such a defence can be offered, it may not be tolerated.

“And yet, my lords, how can I support the claim of filial love by argument—much less the affection of a son to a mother—where love loses its awe, and veneration is mixed with tenderness? What can I say upon such a subject? what can I do but repeat the ready truths which, with the quick impulse of the mind, must spring to the lips of every man on

Speeches.

such a theme? Filial Love! the morality of instinct, the sacrament of nature and duty—or rather let me say, it is miscalled a duty, for it flows from the heart without effort, and is its delight, its indulgence, its enjoyment. It is guided, not by the slow dictates of reason; it awaits not encouragement from reflection, or from thought; it asks no aid of memory; it is an innate, but active, consciousness of having been the object of a thousand tender solitudes, a thousand waking watchful cares, of meek anxiety and patient sacrifices, unremarked and unrequited by the object. It is a gratitude founded upon a conviction of obligations, not remembered, but the more binding because not remembered—because conferred before the tender reason could acknowledge, or the infant memory record, them—a gratitude and affection, which no circumstances should subdue, and which few can strengthen; a gratitude, in which even injury from the object, though it may blend regret, should never breed resentment; an affection which can be increased only by the decay of those to whom we owe it, and which is then most fervent when the tremulous voice of age, resistless in its feebleness, inquires for the natural protector of its cold decline.

“If these are the general sentiments of man, what must be their depravity, what must be their degeneracy, who can blot out and erase from the bosom the virtue that is

Sheridan.

deepest rooted in the human heart, and twined within the cords of life itself—aliens from nature, apostates from humanity! And yet, if there is a crime more fell, more foul— if there is anything worse than a wilful persecutor of his mother—it is to see a deliberate, reasoning instigator and abettor to the deed:— this it is that shocks, disgusts, and appals the mind more than the other—to view, not a wilful parricide, but a parricide by compulsion, a miserable wretch, not actuated by the stubborn evils of his own worthless heart, not driven by the fury of his own distracted brain, but lending his sacrilegious hand, without any malice of his own, to answer the abandoned purposes of the human fiends that have subdued his will! To condemn crimes like these, we need not talk of laws or of human rules—their foulness, their deformity, does not depend upon local constitutions, upon human institutes or religious creeds:—they are crimes—and the persons who perpetrate them are monsters who violate the primitive condition, upon which the earth was given to man,—they are guilty by the general verdict of human kind.”

The following is a good example of Sheridan’s command of the language of crimination:

“It is this circumstance of deliberation and consciousness of his guilt—it is this that inflames the minds of those who watch his transactions, and roots out all pity for a per-

Speeches.

son who could act under such an influence. We conceive of such tyrants as Caligula and Nero, bred up to tyranny and oppression, having had no equals to control them—no moment for reflection—we conceive that, if it could have been possible to seize the guilty profligates for a moment, you might bring conviction to their hearts and repentance to their minds. But when you see a cool, reasoning, deliberate tyrant—one who was not born and bred to arrogance,—who has been nursed in a mercantile line—who has been used to look round among his fellow-subjects—to transact business with his equals—to account for conduct to his master, and, by that wise system of the Company, to detail all his transactions—who never could fly one moment from himself, but must be obliged every night to sit down and hold up a glass to his own soul—who could never be blind to his deformity, and who must have brought his conscience not only to connive at but to approve of it—*this* it is that distinguishes it from the worst cruelties, the worst enormities of those who, born to tyranny, and finding no superior, no adviser, have gone to the last presumption that there were none above to control them hereafter. This is a circumstance that aggravates the whole of the guilt of the unfortunate gentleman we are now arraigning at your bar.”

The peroration, a masterpiece of clever rhetoric and skillful pleading, is as follows:

Sheridan.

“And now before I come to the last magnificent paragraph, let me call the attention of those who, possibly, think themselves capable of judging of the dignity and character of justice in this country; let me call the attention of those who, arrogantly perhaps, presume that they understand what the features, what the duties of justice are here and in India;—let them learn a lesson from this great statesman, this enlarged, this liberal philosopher:—‘I hope I shall not depart from the simplicity of official language in saying, that the majesty of Justice ought to be approached with solicitation, not descend to provoke or invite it, much less to debase itself by the suggestion of wrongs and the promise of redress, with the denunciation of punishment before trial, and even before accusation.’

“This is the exhortation which Mr. Hastings makes to his counsel. This is the character which he gives of British justice.

“But I will ask your lordships, do you approve this representation? Do you feel that this is the true image of Justice? Is this the character of British Justice? Are these her features? Is this her countenance? Is this her gait or her mien? No, I think even now I hear you calling upon me to turn from this vile libel, this base caricature, this Indian pagod, formed by the hand of guilty and knavish tyranny, to dupe the heart of ignorance,—to turn from this deformed idol to the

Speeches.

true majesty of Justice here. *Here*, indeed, I see a different form, enthroned by the sovereign hand of Freedom,—awful without severity—commanding without pride—vigilant and active without restlessness or suspicion—searching and inquisitive without meanness or debasement—not arrogantly scorning to stoop to the voice of afflicted innocence, and in its loveliest attitude when bending to uplift the suppliant at its feet.

“It is by the majesty, by the form of that Justice, that I do conjure and implore your lordships to give your minds to this great business; that I exhort you to look, not so much to words which may be denied or quibbled away, but to the plain facts,—to weigh and consider the testimony in your own minds: we know the result must be inevitable. Let the truth appear and our cause is gained. It is this, I conjure your lordships, for your own honor, for the honor of the nation, for the honor of human nature, now entrusted to your care,—it is this duty that the Commons of England, speaking through us, claim at your hands.

“They exhort you to it by everything that calls sublimely upon the heart of man, by the majesty of that Justice which this bold man has libelled, by the wide fame of your own tribunal, by the sacred pledge by which you swear in the solemn hour of decision, knowing that that decision will then bring you the high-

Sheridan.

est reward that ever blessed the heart of man, the consciousness of having done the greatest act of mercy for the world, that the earth has ever yet received from any hand but Heaven. My lords, I have done."

A REPLY TO BURKE.

(The following is an extract from one of Sheridan's answers to Burke, who had asserted that the French Republicans were given over to Deism and Atheism.)

“As an argument to the feelings and passions of men, the honorable member had great advantages in dwelling on this topic; because it was a subject which those who disliked everything that had the air of cant and profession on the one hand, or of indifference on the other, found it awkward to meddle with. Establishments, tests, and matters of that nature, were proper objects of political discussion in that House, but not general charges of Atheism and Deism, as pressed upon their consideration by the honorable gentleman. Thus far, however, he would say, and it was an opinion he had never changed or concealed, that, although no man can command his conviction, he had ever considered a deliberate disposition to make proselytes in infidelity as an unaccountable depravity. Whoever attempted to pluck the belief or the prejudice on this subject, style it which he would, from the bosom of one man, woman, or child, committed a brutal outrage, the motive for which he had never been able to trace or conceive.”

ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

(This is a selection from Sheridan's speech on the army estimates, the speech which caused the breach of friendship between himself and Burke.)

“He differed,” he said, “decidedly, from his right honorable friend in almost every word that he had uttered respecting a French Revolution. He conceived it to be as just a Revolution as ours, proceeding upon as sound a principle and as just a provocation. He vehemently defended the general views and conduct of the National Assembly. He could not even understand what was meant by the charges against them of having overturned the laws, the justice, and the revenues of their country. What were the laws? the arbitrary mandates of capricious despotism. What their justice? the partial adjudications of venal magistrates. What their revenues? national bankruptcy. This he thought the fundamental error of his right honorable friend's argument, that he accused the National Assembly of creating the evils, which they had found existing in full deformity at the first hour of their meeting.

Speeches.

The public creditor had been defrauded; the manufacturer was without employ; trade was languishing; famine clung upon the poor; despair on all. In this situation, the wisdom and feelings of the nation were appealed to by the government; and was it to be wondered at by Englishmen, that a people, so circumstanced, should search for the cause and source of all their calamities, or that they should find them in the arbitrary constitution of their government, and in the prodigal and corrupt administration of their revenues? For such an evil, when proved, what remedy could be resorted to, but a radical amendment of the frame and fabric of the constitution itself? This change was not the object and wish of the National Assembly only; it was the claim and cry of all France, united as one man for one purpose.

“The cruelties which disgraced the commencement of the French Revolution were ascribed by the orator not to the want of moral principle or of legal restraint, but to a superior abhorrence of that accursed system of despotic government, which had so deformed and corrupted human nature, as to make its subjects capable of such acts; a government that set at naught the property, the liberty, and lives of the subjects; a government that dealt in extortion, dungeons, and tortures, setting an example of depravity to the slaves over which it ruled: when therefore the day of

Sheridan.

power came to the wretched populace, it was not to be wondered at, however much it might be regretted, that they should act without those feelings of justice and humanity of which they had been stripped by the principles and practices of their governors."

IN ANSWER TO LORD MORNINGTON.

(This is the only speech which Sheridan himself corrected for publication. Lord Mornington had spoken of the various atrocities committed in France, and Sheridan replies.)

“But what was the sum of all that he had told the House? that great and dreadful enormities had been committed, at which the heart shuddered, and which not merely wounded every feeling of humanity, but disgusted and sickened the soul. All this was most true; but what did all this prove? What, but that eternal and unalterable truth which had always presented itself to his mind, in whatever way he had viewed the subject, namely, that a long-established despotism so far degraded and debased human nature, as to render its subjects, on the first recovery of their rights, unfit for the exercise of them. But never had he, nor would he meet but with reprobation that mode of argument which went, in fact, to establish, as an inference from this truth, that those who had been long slaves, ought, therefore, to remain so for ever! No; the lesson ought to be, he would again repeat, a tenfold horror of

Sheridan.

that despotic form of government, which had so profaned and changed the nature of civilized man, and a still more jealous apprehension of any system tending to withhold the rights and liberties of our fellow-creatures. Such a form of government might be considered as twice cursed; while it existed, it was solely responsible for the miseries and calamities of its subjects; and should a day of retribution come, and the tyranny be destroyed, it was equally to be charged with all the enormities which the folly or frenzy of those who overturned it should commit.

“But the madness of the French people was not confined to their proceedings within their own country; we, and all the Powers of Europe, had to dread it. True; but was not this also to be accounted for? Wild and unsettled as their state of mind was necessarily upon the events which had thrown such power so suddenly into their hands, the surrounding States had goaded them into a still more savage state of madness, fury, and desperation. We had unsettled their reason, and then reviled their insanity; we drove them to the extremities that produced the evils we arraigned; we baited them like wild beasts, until at length we made them so. The conspiracy of Pilnitz, and the brutal threats of the royal abettors of that plot against the rights of nations and of men, had, in truth, to answer for all the additional misery, horrors,

Speeches.

and iniquity which had since disgraced and incensed humanity. Such has been your conduct towards France, that you have created the passions which you persecute; you mark a nation to be cut off from the world; you covenant for their extermination; you swear to hunt them in their inmost recesses; you load them with every species of execration; and you now come forth with whining declamations on the horror of their turning upon you with the fury which you inspired."

After alluding to a quotation which Lord Mornington had made from Condorcet, asserting that "Revolutions are always the work of the minority," Sheridan says in a spirited manner:

"If this be true, it certainly is a most ominous thing for the enemies of reform in England; for, if it holds true, of necessity, that the minority still prevails, in national contests, it must be a consequence that the smaller the minority the more certain must be the success. In what a dreadful situation, then, must the noble lord be and all the alarmists! for never surely, was a minority so small, so thin in number, as the present. Conscious, however, that M. Condorcet was mistaken in our object, I am glad to find that we are terrible in proportion as we are few; I rejoice that the liberality of secession which has thinned our ranks has only served to make us more formidable. The alarmists will hear this with new apprehen-

Sheridan.

sions; they will no doubt return to us with a view to diminish our force, and encumber us with their alliance in order to reduce us to insignificance.”

About this time, it was apparent that the great Whig seceders were about to yield to the invitation of Mr. Pitt and the strong persuasion of Burke, join the administration and accept office. Sheridan was naturally indignant. Lord Mornington had contrasted the privations and sacrifices demanded by the Minister of Finance from the French with those required of the English nation. In reply Sheridan says:

“The noble lord need not remind us that there is no great danger of our Chancellor of the Exchequer making any such experiment. I can more easily fancy another sort of speech for our prudent minister. I can more easily conceive him modestly comparing himself and his own measures with the character and conduct of his rival, and saying, ‘Do I demand of you, wealthy citizens, to lend your hoards to Government without interest? On the contrary, when I shall come to propose a loan, there is not a man of you to whom I shall not hold out at least a job in every part of the subscription, and an usurious profit upon every pound you devote to the necessities of your country. Do I demand of you, my fellow-placemen and brother-pensioners, that you should sacrifice any part of your stipends to

Speeches.

the public exigency? On the contrary, am I not daily increasing your emoluments and your numbers in proportion as the country becomes unable to provide for you? Do I require of you, my latest and most zealous proselytes—of you who have come over to me for the special purpose of supporting the war—a war, on the success of which you solemnly protest that the salvation of Britain, and of civil society itself, depends—do I require of you, that you should make a temporary sacrifice, in the cause of human nature, of the greater part of your private incomes? No, gentlemen; I scorn to take advantage of the eagerness of your zeal; and to prove that I think the sincerity of your attachment to me needs no such test, I will make your interest co-operate with your principle: I will quarter many of you on the public supply, instead of calling on you to contribute to it; and, while their whole thoughts are absorbed in patriotic apprehensions for their country, I will dexterously force upon others the favorite objects of the vanity or ambition of their lives.’

* * * * *

“Good God, sir, that he should have thought it prudent to have forced this contrast upon our attention; that he should triumphantly remind us of everything that shame should have withheld, and caution would have buried in oblivion! Will those who stood forth with a parade of disinterested patriotism, and

Sheridan.

vaunted of the *sacrifices* they have made, and the *exposed situation* they had chosen, in order the better to oppose the friends of Brissot in England—will they thank the noble lord for reminding us how soon these lofty professions dwindled into little jobbing pursuits for followers and dependents, as unfit to fill the offices procured for them, as the offices themselves were unfit to be created? Will the train of newly-titled alarmists, of supernumerary negotiators, of pensioned paymasters, agents and commissaries, thank him for remarking to us how profitable their panic has been to themselves, and how expensive to the country? What a contrast, indeed, do we exhibit! What! in such an hour as this, at a moment pregnant with the national fate, when, pressing as the exigency may be, the hard task of squeezing the money from the pockets of an impoverished people, from the toil, the drudgery of the shivering poor, must make the most practised collector's heart ache while he tears it from them—can it be that people of high rank, and professing high principles, that *they* or *their families* should seek to thrive on the spoils of misery, and fatten on the meals wrested from industrious poverty? Can it be that this should be the case with the very persons who state the *unprecedented peril of the country* as the *sole* cause of their being found in the ministerial ranks? The Constitution is in danger, religion is in danger, the very exist-

Speeches.

ence of the nation itself is endangered; all personal and party considerations ought to vanish; the war must be supported by every possible exertion, and by every possible sacrifice; the people must not murmur at their burdens—it is for their salvation, their all is at stake. The time is come when all honest and disinterested men should rally round the throne as round a standard;—for what? ye honest and disinterested men, to receive, for your own private emolument, a portion of those very taxes wrung from the people, on the pretence of saving them from the poverty and distress which you say the enemy would inflict, but which you take care no enemy shall be able to aggravate. Oh! shame! shame! is this a time for selfish intrigues, and the little dirty traffic for lucre and emolument? Does it suit the honor of a gentleman to ask at such a moment? Does it become the honesty of a Minister to grant? Is it intended to confirm the pernicious doctrine, so industriously propagated by many, that all public men are impostors, and that every politician has his price? Or even where there is no principle in the bosom, why does not prudence hint to the mercenary and the vain to abstain a while at least, and wait the fitting of the times? Improvident impatience! Nay, even from those who seem to have no direct object of office or profit, what is the language which their actions speak? The throne is in

Sheridan.

danger! 'We will support the throne, but let us share the smiles of royalty.' The order of nobility is in danger! 'I will fight for nobility,' says the viscount, 'but my zeal would be much greater if I were made an earl.' 'Rouse all the marquis within me,' exclaims the earl, 'and the peerage never turned forth a more undaunted champion in its cause than I shall prove.' 'Stain my green riband blue,' cries out the illustrious knight, 'and the fountain of honor will have a fast and faithful servant.' What are the people to think of our sincerity? What credit are they to give to our professions? Is this system to be persevered in? Is there nothing that whispers to that right honorable gentleman that the crisis is too big, that the times are too gigantic, to be ruled by the little hackneyed and everyday means of ordinary corruption?"

ON THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

(This extract on the character of the people of England, at that time, seems of peculiar interest. It appears both candid and just.)

“Never was there,” he said, “any country in which there was so much absence of public principle, and at the same time so many instances of private worth. Never was there so much charity and humanity toward the poor and the distressed; any act of cruelty or oppression never failed to excite a sentiment of general indignation against its authors. It was a circumstance peculiarly strange, that though luxury had arrived at such a pitch, it had so little effect in depraving the hearts and destroying the morals of people in private life; and almost every day produced some fresh example of generous feelings and noble exertions of benevolence. Yet, amidst these phenomena of private virtue, it was to be remarked that there was an almost total want of public spirit, and a most deplorable contempt of public principle.

* * * * When Great Britain falls, the case will not be with her as with Rome

Sheridan.

in former times. When Rome fell, she fell by the weight of her own vices. The inhabitants were so corrupted and degraded, as to be unworthy of a continuance of prosperity, and incapable to enjoy the blessings of liberty; their minds were bent to the state in which a reverse of fortune placed them. But when Great Britain falls, she will fall with a people full of private worth and virtue; she will be ruined by the profligacy of the governors, and the security of her inhabitants—the consequence of those pernicious doctrines which have taught her to place a false confidence in her strength and freedom, and not to look with distrust and apprehension to the misconduct and corruption of those to whom she has trusted the management of her resources.”

ON THE REBELLION IN IRELAND.

“What! when conciliation was held out to the people of Ireland, was there any discontent? When the Government of Ireland was agreeable to the people, was there any discontent? After the prospect of that conciliation was taken away—after Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled—after the hopes which had been raised were blasted—when the spirit of the people was beaten down, insulted, despised, I will ask any gentleman to point out a single act of conciliation which has emanated from the Government of Ireland? On the contrary, has not that country exhibited one continual scene of the most grievous oppression, of the most vexatious proceedings; arbitrary punishments inflicted; torture declared necessary by the highest authority in the sister-kingdom next to that of the legislature? And do gentlemen say that the indignant spirit which is roused by such exercise of government is unprovoked? Is this conciliation? is this lenity? Has everything been done to avert the evils of rebellion? It is the fashion to say, and the Address holds the same language, that the rebellion which now rages in the sister-king-

Sheridan.

dom has been owing to the machinations of 'wicked men.' Agreeing to the amendment proposed, it was my first intention to move that these words should be omitted. But, sir, the fact they assert is true. It is, indeed, to the measures of wicked men that the deplorable state of Ireland is to be imputed. It is to those wicked ministers who have broken the promises they held out; who betrayed the party they seduced into their views, to be the instruments of the foulest treachery that ever was practised against any people. It is to those wicked ministers who have given up that devoted country to plunder—resigned it a prey to this faction, by which it has so long been trampled upon, and abandoned it to every species of insult and oppression by which a country was ever overwhelmed, or the spirit of a people insulted, that we owe the miseries into which Ireland is plunged, and the dangers by which England is threatened. These evils are the doings of wicked ministers, and applied to them, the language of the Address records a fatal and melancholy truth."

ON THE PROBABILITY OF A FRENCH INVASION.

“If the French are determined to invade us, they will, no doubt, come furnished with flaming manifestoes. The Directory will probably instruct their generals to make the fairest professions of the manner in which their army will act; but of these professions surely no one can be believed. Some, however, may deceive themselves by supposing that the great Buonaparte will have concerted with the Directory that he is not to tarnish his laurels, or sully his glory, by permitting his soldiers to plunder our banks, to ruin our commerce, to enslave our people; but that he is to come, like a minister of grace, with no other purpose than to give peace to the cottager, to restore citizens to their rights, to establish real freedom, and a liberal and humane government. This undoubtedly were noble; this were generous; this, I had almost said, were god-like. But can there be supposed an Englishman so stupid, so besotted, so befooled, as to give a moment’s credit to such ridiculous professions? Not that I deny but that a great republic may be actuated by these generous prin-

Sheridan.

ciples, and by a thirst of glory for glory's sake. Such, I might be induced to believe, was the spirit which inspired the Romans in the early and virtuous periods of their republic. They fought and conquered for the meed of warlike renown. Still sooner would I believe that the Spartan heroes fought for fame only, and not for the plunder of wealth and luxury, which they were more ready to exclude from than to introduce into the bosom of their republic. But far otherwise are we to interpret the objects that whet the valor and stimulate the prowess of modern republicans. Do we not see they have planted the tree of liberty in the garden of monarchy, where it still continues to produce the same rare and luxurious fruit? Do we not see the French republicans as eager as ever were the courtly friends of the monarchy to collect from among the vanquished countries, and to accumulate all the elegances, all the monuments of the arts and sciences; determined to make their capital the luxurious mart and school for a subject and admiring world? It is not glory they seek, for they are already gorged with it; it is not territory they grasp at, they are already encumbered with the extent they have acquired. What, then, is their object? They come for what they really want; they come for ships, for commerce, for credit, and for capital. Yes, they come for the sinews, the bones, for the marrow, and for

Speeches.

the very heart's blood of Great Britain. But now," said Mr. Sheridan, "let us examine what we are to purchase at this price. It is natural for a merchant to look closely to the quality of the article which he is about to buy at a high rate. Liberty, it appears, is now their staple commodity; but should we not carefully attend, whether what they export be not of the same kind with what they keep for their home consumption? Attend, I say, and examine how little of real liberty they themselves enjoy, who are so forward and prodigal in bestowing it on others. On this subject I do not touch as a matter of reproach. The unjust measures they have pursued they may have pursued from necessity. If the majority of the French people are desirous and determined to continue a republican form of government, the Directory must do what they can to secure the republic. This conduct, both prudence, policy, and a view to their own security, may dictate and enforce. But were they to perform the fair promises which they would fain hold out to us, they would then establish more liberty here than they themselves enjoy in France. Were they to leave us the trial by jury uninterrupted, and thus grant us a constitution more enviable than their own, would not this be rearing a fabric here which would stand as a glaring contrast, and prove a lasting reproach to their own country?"

Sheridan.

Towards the conclusion of this most eloquent and patriotic speech, which united the warmth of Demosthenes with the nerve of Cicero, the orator touched upon the best means of opposing a successful resistance to an enemy of this temper and disposition. "I will not," said he, "here require of ministers to lay aside their political prejudices or animosities; neither will I require of those who oppose them altogether to suspend theirs; but both must feel that this sacrifice is necessary, at least, on one point, resistance to the enemy, and upon this subject I must entreat them to accord; for here it is necessary that they should both act with one heart and one hand. If there be any who say we will oppose the French when we have succeeded in removing the present ministers, to them I would say:— 'Sirs, let us defer that for a moment; let us now oppose the enemy and avert the storm, otherwise we shall not long have even ministers to combat and remove.' If there be any who say that ministers have brought our present calamities on us, and that they ought, therefore, to be first removed, I will grant them that there is justice and logic in the argument; but its policy I am at a loss to discover. There are those who think the present ministers incapable, and that they should on that account be displaced. Granted: but if they cannot succeed in removing them, and if they be sincere in their opinion of the incapacity of

Speeches.

ministers, how can they approve themselves sincere in their wish to resist the enemy, unless they contribute to aid and rectify the incapacity of which they complain? There are, however, some gentlemen who seem to divide their enmity and opposition between ministers and the French; but do they not see that the inevitable consequence of this division must be the conquest of the country? Why then do they thus hesitate about which side of the question they ought to take? Can there be anything more childish than to say, I will wait until the enemy has landed, and then I will resist them; as if preparation was no essential part of effectual resistance? What more childish and ridiculous than to say, I will take a pistol and fire at them; but I will not go the length of a musket; no: I will attack them with my left, but I will not exert my right hand against them? All must unite, all must go every length against them, or there can be no hopes; and already I rejoice to see the necessary spirit begin to rise throughout the country and the metropolis; and when on this side of the House we manifest this spirit, and forget all other motives to action, I trust the same sentiments will prevail on the other; and that the offers we make sincerely will be accepted unreluctantly. But now I must observe, that the defence of the country might be essentially aided by two very different classes of men; the one composed of those sturdy,

Sheridan.

hulking fellows whom we daily see behind coaches, or following through the streets and squares their masters and mistresses, who, in the meantime, perhaps, are ruminating on the evils of an invasion; to such I would entrust the defence of the capital, and would add to them the able-bodied men which the different offices might easily produce. There is another class I would also beg leave to mention; and those are young gentlemen of high rank, who are daily mounted on horses of high blood. They surely, at this perilous moment, might be better employed; though it would ill become me to erect myself into a rigid censor of amusement and dissipation. That line of argument would not exactly suit my own line of conduct; nor am I an enemy to their amusements; on the contrary: but their mornings might now be more usefully devoted in preparing for the great task which they will have to perform; for sure I am, they possess a spirit that will not permit them to skulk and hide their heads from the storm; they will scorn to be seen a miserable train of emigrants wandering and despised in a foreign land."

RIDICULE OF PITT AND ADDINGTON.

(In 1801 Pitt was succeeded as prime minister by Addington, although it has been claimed that the latter was completely under the domination of the former. In a speech, during the discussion of the Definitive Treaty, Sheridan in a highly humorous manner, ridicules the understanding between the ex-minister and his successor.)

“I should like to support the present minister on fair ground; but what is he? a sort of *outside passenger*,—or rather a man leading the horses round a corner, while reins, whip, and all, are in the hands of the coachman on the *box!* (looking at Mr. Pitt’s elevated seat, three or four benches above that of the Treasury.) Why not have an union of the two ministers, or, at least, some intelligible connection? When the ex-minister quitted office, almost all the *subordinate* ministers kept their places. How was it that the whole family did not move together? Had he only one *covered wagon* to carry friends and goods? or has he left directions behind him that they may

Sheridan.

know where to call? I remember a fable of Aristophanes's, which is translated from Greek into decent English.—I mention this for the country gentlemen. It is of a man that sat so long on a seat (about as long, perhaps, as the ex-minister did on the Treasury-bench), that he grew to it. When Hercules pulled him off, he left all the sitting part of the man behind him. The House can make the allusion."

The following is another witty passage from this speech:—

"But let France have colonies! Oh, yes! let her have a good trade, that she may be afraid of war, says the learned member,—that's the way to make Buonaparte love peace. He has had, to be sure, a sort of military education. He has been abroad, and is rather *rough company*; but if you put him behind the *counter* a little, he will mend exceedingly. When I was reading the treaty, I thought all the names of foreign places. viz., Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Cochin, Martinico, etc., all *cessions*. Not they,—they are all so many *traps* and *holes* to catch this silly fellow in, and make a *merchant* of him! I really think the best way upon this principle would be this:—let the merchants of London open a *public subscription*, and set him up at once. I hear a great deal respecting a certain *statue* about to be erected to the right honorable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) now in my eye, at a great expense.

Speeches.

Send all that money over to the First Consul, and give him, what you talk of so much, *Capital*, to begin trade with. I hope the right honorable gentleman over the way will, like the First Consul, refuse a statue for the present, and postpone it as a work to posterity. There is no harm, however, in marking out the place. The right honorable gentleman is musing, perhaps, on what square, or place, he will choose for its erection. I recommend the *Bank of England*. Now for the material. Not gold: no, no!—he has not left enough of it. I should, however, propose *papier maché* and old bank notes!”

CRITICISMS OF APPOINTMENTS TO OFFICE.

(In 1804 Pitt was again prime minister. He called to his aid Addington and other members of the defunct administration. In the following passage Sheridan criticises this action.)

“The right honorable gentleman went into office alone;—but, lest the government should become too full of vigor from his support, he thought proper to beckon back some of the weakness of the former administration. He, I suppose, thought that the ministry became, from his support, like spirits above proof, and required to be diluted; that, like gold refined to a certain degree, it would be unfit for use without a certain mixture of alloy; that the administration would be too brilliant and dazzle the House, unless he called back a certain part of the mist and fog of the last administration to render it tolerable to the eye. As to the great change made in the ministry by the introduction of the right honorable gen-

Speeches.

tleman himself, I would ask, does he imagine that he came back to office with the same estimation that he left it? I am sure he is much mistaken if he fancies that he did. The right honorable gentleman retired from office because, as was stated, he could not carry an important question, which he deemed necessary to satisfy the just claims of the Catholics; and in going out he did not hesitate to tear off the sacred veil of majesty, describing his sovereign as the only person that stood in the way of this desirable object. After the right honorable gentleman's retirement, he advised the Catholics to look to no one but him for the attainment of their rights, and cautiously to abstain from forming a connection with any other person. But how does it appear, now that the right honorable gentleman is returned to office? He declines to perform his promise; and has received, as his colleagues in office, those who are pledged to resist the measure. Does not the right honorable gentleman then feel that he comes back to office with a character degraded by the violation of a solemn pledge, given to a great and respectable body of the people, upon a particular and momentous occasion? Does the right honorable gentleman imagine either that he returns to office with the same character for political wisdom, after the description which he gave of the talents and capacity of his predecessors, and after having shown by his own actions,

Sheridan.

that his description was totally unfounded?"

In the same speech, alluding to Lord Melville's appointment to the Admiralty, he says:—

"But then, I am told, there is the First Lord of the Admiralty,—'Do you forget the leader of the grand Catamaran project? Are you not aware of the important change in that department, and the advantage the country is likely to derive from that change?' Why, I answered, that I do not know of any peculiar qualifications the noble lord has to preside over the Admiralty; but I do know, that if I were to judge of him from the kind of capacity he evinced while Minister of War, I should entertain little hopes of him. If, however, the right honorable gentleman should say to me, 'Where else would you put that noble lord, would you have him appointed War Minister again?' I should say, 'Oh, no, by no means.'—I remember too well the expeditions to Toulon, to Quiberon, to Corsica, and to Holland, the responsibility for each of which the noble lord took on himself, entirely releasing from any responsibility the Commander-in-chief and the Secretary at War. I also remember that which, although so glorious to our arms in the result, I still shall call a most unwarrantable project,—the expedition to Egypt. It may be said, that as the noble lord was so unfit for the military department, the naval was the proper place for him. Perhaps there were

Speeches.

people who would adopt this whimsical reasoning. I remember a story told respecting Mr. Garrick, who was once applied to by an eccentric Scotchman, to introduce a production of his on the stage. This Scotchman was such a good-humored fellow, that he was called 'Honest Johnny M'Cree.' Johnny wrote four acts of a tragedy, which he showed to Mr. Garrick, who dissuaded him from finishing it; telling him that his talent did not lie that way; so Johnny abandoned the tragedy, and set about writing a comedy. When this was finished, he showed it to Mr. Garrick, who found it to be still more exceptionable than the tragedy, and of course could not be persuaded to bring it forward on the stage. This surprised poor Johnny, and he remonstrated. 'Nay, now, David' (said Johnny), 'did you not tell me that my talents did not lie in tragedy?'—'Yes' (replied Garrick), 'but I did not tell you that they lay in comedy.'—'Then' (exclaimed Johnny), 'gin they dinna lie there, where the de'il dittha lie, mon?' Unless the noble lord at the head of the Admiralty has the same reasoning in his mind as Johnny M'Cree, he cannot possibly suppose that his incapacity for the direction of the War department necessarily qualifies him for the presidency of the Naval. Perhaps, if the noble lord be told that he has no talents for the latter, his lordship may exclaim with honest Johnny M'Cree, 'Gin they dinna lie there, where the de'il dittha lie, mon?'

DECLINATION OF CANDIDACY.

(The passages below appeared in an address to the Westminster electors, the large majority of whom offered him their support.)

In speaking of Mr. Fox, he said:

“It is true there have been occasions upon which I have differed with him—painful recollections of the most painful moments of my political life! Nor were there wanting those who endeavored to represent these differences as a departure from the homage which his superior mind, though unclaimed by him, was entitled to, and from the allegiance of friendship which our hearts all swore to him. But never was the genuine and confiding texture of his soul more manifest than on such occasions: he knew that nothing on earth could detach me from him; and he resented insinuations against the sincerity and integrity of a friend, which he would not have noticed had they been pointed against himself. With such a man to have battled in the cause of genuine liberty,—with such a man to have struggled against the inroads of oppression and corrup-

Speeches.

tion,—with such an example before me, to have to boast that I never in my life gave one vote in Parliament that was not on the side of freedom, is the congratulation that attends the retrospect of my public life. His friendship was the pride and honor of my days. I never, for one moment, regretted to share with him the difficulties, the calumnies, and sometimes even the dangers, that attended an honorable course. And now, reviewing my past political life, were the option possible that I should re-tread the path, I solemnly and deliberately declare that I would prefer to pursue the same course; to bear up under the same pressure; to abide by the same principles; and to remain by his side an exile from power, distinction, and emolument, rather than be at this moment a splendid example of successful servility or prosperous apostasy, though clothed with power, honor, titles, gorged with sinecures, and lord of hoards obtained from the plunder of the people.”

At the conclusion of his address he thus alludes to the circumstances that had obliged him to decline the honor offered him:—

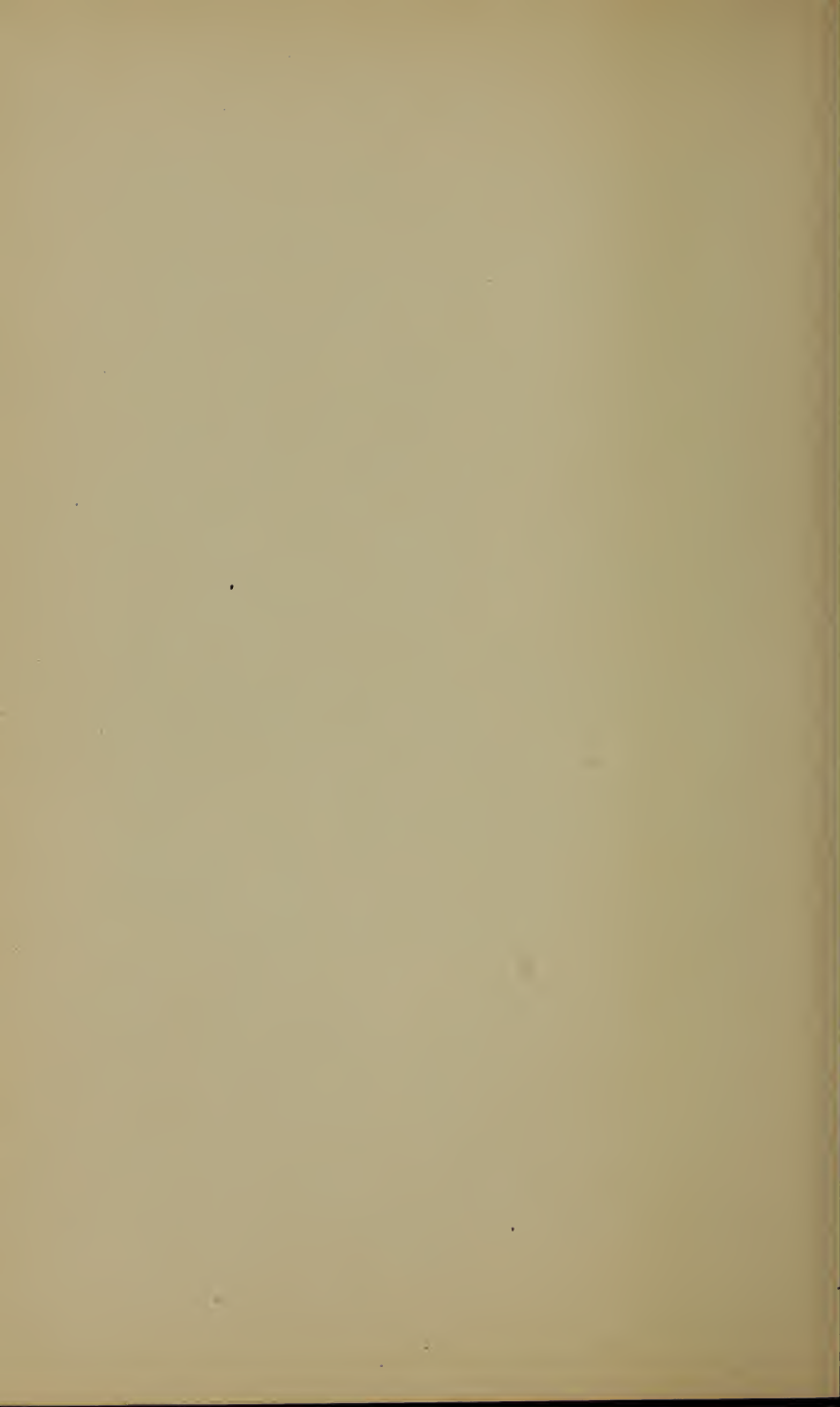
“Illiberal warnings have been held out, most unauthoritatively I know, that by persevering in the present contest I may risk my official situation; and if I retire, I am aware that minds, as coarse and illiberal, may assign the dread of that as my motive. To such insinuations I shall scorn to make any other reply

Sheridan.

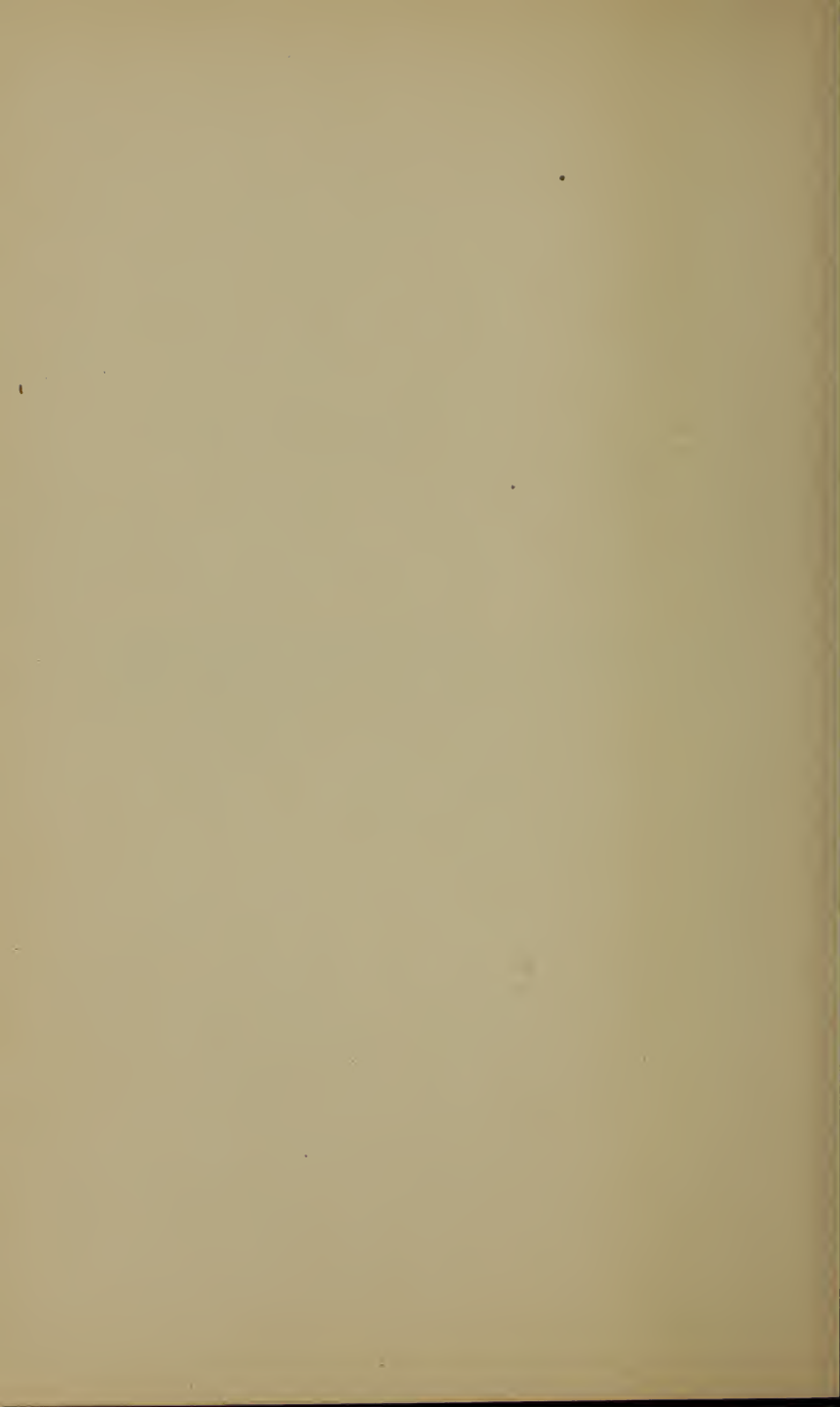
than a reference to the whole of my past political career. I consider it as no boast to say, that any one who has struggled through such a portion of life as I have, without obtaining an office, is not likely to abandon his principles to retain one when acquired. If riches do not give independence, the next best thing to being very rich is to have been used to be very poor. But independence is not allied to wealth, to birth, to rank, to power, to titles or to honor. Independence is in the mind of a man or it is nowhere. On this ground, were I to decline the contest, I should scorn the imputation that should bring the purity of my purpose into doubt. No minister can expect to find in me a servile vassal. No minister can expect from me the abandonment of any principles I have avowed, or any pledge I have given. I know not that I have hitherto shrunk in place from opinions I have maintained while in opposition. Did there exist a minister of a different cast from any I know in being, were he to attempt to exact from me a different conduct, my office should be at his service to-morrow. Such a ministry might strip me of my situation, in some respects of considerable emolument, but he could not strip me of the proud conviction that I was right; he could not strip me of my own self-esteem; he could not strip me, I think, of some portion of the confidence and good opinion of the people. But I am noticing the calumnious threat I allude to

Speeches.

more than it deserves. There can be no peril, I venture to assert, under the present government, in the free exercise of discretion, such as belongs to the present question. I therefore disclaim the merit of putting anything to hazard. If I have missed the opportunity of obtaining all the support I might, perhaps, have had on the present occasion, from a very scrupulous delicacy, which I think became and was incumbent upon me, but which I by no means conceive to have been a fit rule for others, I cannot repent it. While the slightest aspiration of breath passed those lips, now closed for ever,—while one drop of life's blood beat in that heart, now cold for ever,—I could not, I ought not, to have acted otherwise than I did.—I now come with a very embarrassed feeling to that declaration which I yet think you must have expected from me, but which I make with reluctance. because, from the marked approbation I have experienced from you, I fear that with reluctance you will receive it,—I feel myself under the necessity of retiring from this contest.”



Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.



Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

When young, Sheridan was generally accounted handsome; but in later years his eyes were the only testimonials of beauty that remained to him. It was, indeed, in the upper part of his face that the spirit of the man chiefly reigned, the dominion of the world and the senses being rather strongly marked out in the lower. In his person he was about the middle size, and his general make was robust and well proportioned. It is remarkable that his arms, though of powerful strength, were thin, and appeared by no means muscular. His hands were small and delicate; and the following couplet, written on a cast from one of them, very lively enumerates both its physical and moral qualities:—

*Good at a Fight, but better at a Play,
Godlike in Giving, but—the Devil to Pay!*

In the debate, 30th May, 1799, about putting down Sunday newspapers, Sheridan, amongst other things, in answer to Lord Belgrave, observed that “in the law, as it at present exists, there was an exception in favor of selling mackerel on the Lord’s day; but would the

Sheridan.

noble lord recollect that people might think stale news as bad as stale mackerel?"

The *Westminster Review* gives the highest and most deserved praise to Sheridan for his meritorious exertions in favor of the liberty of the press on this occasion, and although all notice of them is omitted by Mr. Moore, it is justly remarked by the reviewer that no event in Sheridan's life *does* him greater honor.

During the year 1806, Sheridan, having been told that his enemies took pleasure in speaking ill of him, on account of his favoring an obnoxious tax which his party were about to force through the House—"Well, let them," said Sherry; "it is but fair that they should have some *pleasure* for their money."

"The two Sheridans," says Kelly, "were supping with me one night after the opera, at a period when Tom expected to get into Parliament——

"I think, father," said he, "that many men, who are called great patriots in the House of Commons, are great humbugs. For my own part, if I get into Parliament, I will pledge myself to no party, but write upon my forehead in legible characters, 'To be let.'"

"And under that, Tom," said his father, "write, 'Unfurnished.'"

Tom took the joke, but was even with him on another occasion.

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

Mr. Sheridan had a cottage about half a mile from Hounslow Heath. Tom being very short of cash, asked his father to let him have some.

"Money, I have none," was the reply.

"Be the consequence what it may, money I must have," said Tom.

"If that be the case, my dear Tom," said the affectionate parent, "you will find a case of loaded pistols upstairs, and a horse ready saddled in the stable. The night is dark, and you are within half a mile of Hounslow Heath."

"I understand what you mean," said Tom; "but I tried that last night. I unluckily stopped Peake, your treasurer, who told me that you had been beforehand with him, and had robbed him of every sixpence he had in the world."

His hours of composition, as long as he continued to be an author, were at night, and he required a profusion of lights around him as he wrote. Wine, too, was one of his favorite helps to inspiration. "If the thought," he would say, "is slow to come, a glass of good wine encourages it; and, when it does come, a glass of good wine rewards it."

Sheridan always said that the Duke of Wellington would succeed in Portugal; General

Sheridan.

Tarleton held the reverse opinion. Tarleton, who had been wrong, grew obstinate. So on the news of the retreat of the French at Torres Vedras, Sheridan, by way of taunt, said, "Well, Tarleton, are you on your high horse still?"—"Oh, higher than ever; if I was on a horse before, I am on an elephant now."—"No, no, my dear fellow; you were on an ass before, and you are on a mule now."

One day Sheridan met two royal dukes in St. James's Street, and the younger flippantly remarked, "I say, Sherry we have just been discussing whether you are a greater fool or rogue: what is your opinion, old boy?"—Sheridan bowed, smiled, and, as he took each of them by the arm, replied, "Why, faith, I believe I am between both."

Lord Lauderdale, happening to say that he would repeat some good thing of Sheridan's, he replied, "Pray don't, my dear Lauderdale; *a joke in your mouth is no laughing matter.*"

Sheridan was disputing one day with Monk Lewis, the author of "The Castle Spectre," which had filled the exhausted treasury of Drury Lane, when the latter, in support of his argument, offered to bet Mr. Sheridan all the money "The Castle Spectre" had brought that he was right. "No," answered the man-

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

ager; "I cannot afford to bet so much as that; but I will tell you what I will do—I'll bet you *all it is worth.*"

Once, being on a parliamentary committee, he arrived when all the members were assembled and seated and about to commence business. He looked round in vain for a seat, and then, with a bow and a quaint twinkle in his eyes, said, "Will any gentleman *move*, that I might take the chair?"

Hearing that Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, had boasted of his power of conferring and distributing literary reputation, he muttered, "Very true; and in the present instance he has done it so thoroughly that he has none left for himself."

After a very violent speech from an Opposition member, Mr. Burke started suddenly from his seat, and rushed to the Ministerial side of the House, exclaiming, with much vehemence, "I quit the camp! I quit the camp!"—"I hope," said Mr. Sheridan, "as the honorable gentleman has quitted the camp as a *deserter*, he will not return to it as a spy."

Cumberland's children induced their father to take them to see "The School for Scandal." Every time the delighted youngsters laughed

Sheridan.

at what was going on on the stage, he pinched them, and said, "What are you laughing at, my dear little folks? you should not laugh, my angels; there is nothing to laugh at;" and then, in an undertone, "Keep still, you little dunces." —Sheridan, having been told this, said, "It was very ungrateful in Cumberland to have been displeased with his poor children for laughing at *my comedy*, for I went the other night to see *his tragedy*, and laughed at it from beginning to end."

During his last illness, the medical attendants apprehending that they would be obliged to perform an operation on him, asked him "if he had ever undergone one." "Never," replied Sheridan, "except when sitting for my picture, or having my hair cut."

He dreaded the newspapers and always courted their favor. He used often to say, "Let me but have the periodical press on my side, and there should be nothing in this country which I would not accomplish."

Lord Belgrave (afterwards the Earl of Grosvenor) having clenched a speech in the House with a long Greek quotation, Sheridan in reply admitted the force of the quotation so far as it went, "but," said he, "had the noble lord proceeded a little further and completed the passage he would have seen that it applied

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

the other way." Sheridan then spouted something, *ore rotundo*, which had all the *ais, ois, ous, kon, and kos*, that give the wonted assurance of a Greek quotation; upon which Lord Belgrave very promptly and handsomely complimented the honorable member on his readiness of recollection, and frankly admitted that the continuation of the passage had the tendency ascribed to it by Mr. Sheridan, and that he had overlooked it when he gave the quotation. On the breaking up of the House Fox, who piqued himself on having some Greek, went up to Sheridan and asked him, "Sheridan, how came you so ready with that passage? It is certainly as you say, but I was not aware of it before you quoted it." It is unnecessary to say that there is no Greek at all in Sheridan's impromptu.

Being asked, "Why do we honor ambition and despise avarice, while they are both but the desire of possessing?" "Because," said Sheridan, "the one is natural, the other artificial; the one the sign of mental health, the other of mental decay; the one appetite, the other disease."

He jocularly remarked one day to a creditor who demanded instant payment of a long standing debt with interest: "My dear sir, you know it is not my *interest* to pay the *principal*; nor is it my *principle* to pay the *interest*."

Sheridan.

Kelly, having to perform an Irish character, got Johnson to coach him up in the brogue, but with so little success that Sheridan said, on entering the green-room at the conclusion of the piece, "Bravo, Kelly! I never heard you speak such good English in all my life."

Richardson was remarkable for his love of disputation; and Tickell, when hard pressed by him in argument, used often, as a last resource, to assume the voice and manner of Mr. Fox, which he had the power of mimicking so exactly, that Richardson confessed he sometimes stood awed and silenced by the resemblance.

This disputatious humor of Richardson was once turned to account by Sheridan in a very characteristic manner. Having had a hackney-coach in employ for five or six hours, and not being provided with the means of paying it, he happened to espy Richardson in the street, and proposed to take him in the coach some part of his way. The offer being accepted, Sheridan lost no time in starting a subject of conversation, on which he knew his companion was sure to become argumentative and animated. Having, by well-managed contradiction, brought him to the proper pitch of excitement, he affected to grow impatient and angry himself, and saying that "he could not think of staying in the same coach with a person that would use such language," pulled the

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

check-string, and desired the coachman to let him out. Richardson, wholly occupied with the argument, and regarding the retreat of his opponent as an acknowledgment of defeat, still pressed his point, and even hollowed "more last words" through the coach window after Sheridan, who, walking quietly home, left the poor disputant responsible for the heavy fare of the coach.

His improvidence in everything connected with money was most remarkable. He would frequently be obliged to stop on his journeys, for want of the means of getting on, and to remain living expensively at an inn, till a remittance could reach him. His letters to the treasurer of the theatre on these occasions were generally headed with the words, "Money-bound." A friend of his said, that one morning, while waiting for him in his study, he cast his eyes over the heap of unopened letters that lay upon the table, and, seeing one or two with coronets on the seals, said to Mr. Westley, the treasurer, who was present, "I see we are all treated alike." Mr. Westley then informed him that he had once found, on looking over his table, a letter which he had himself sent, a few weeks before, to Mr. Sheridan, enclosing a ten-pound note, to release him from some inn, but which Sheridan, having raised the supplies in some other way, had never thought of opening. The prudent trea-

Sheridan.

urer took away the letter, and reserved the enclosure for some future exigence.

Among instances of his inattention to letters, the following is mentioned. Going one day to the banking-house, where he was accustomed to be paid his salary, as Receiver of Cornwall, and where they sometimes accommodated him with small sums before the regular time of payment, he asked, with all due humility, whether they could oblige him with the loan of twenty pounds. "Certainly, sir," said the clerk,—“would you like any more—fifty, or a hundred?” Sheridan, all smiles and gratitude, answered that a hundred pounds would be of the greatest convenience to him. “Perhaps you would like to take two hundred or three?” said the clerk. At every increase of the sum, the surprise of the borrower increased. “Have not you then received our letter?” said the clerk;—on which it turned out that, in consequence of the falling in of some fine, a sum of twelve hundred pounds had been lately placed to the credit of the Receiver-General, and that, from not having opened the letter to apprise him, he had been left in ignorance of his good luck.

When Sheridan was asked what wine he liked best, he said—other people's.

To Lord Holland Sheridan said one day: “They talk of avarice, lust, ambition, as great

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

passions. Vanity is the great commanding passion of all. It is this that produces the most grand and heroic deeds, or impels to the most dreadful crimes. Save me from this passion, and I can defy the others. They are mere urchins, but this is a giant."

Sheridan was once talking to a friend about the Prince Regent, who took great credit to himself for various public occurrences, as if they had been directed by his political skill, or foreseen by his political sagacity; "but," said Sheridan, after expatiating on this, "what his Royal Highness more particularly prides himself upon, is the late excellent harvest."

Shaw, having lent Sheridan five hundred pounds, dunned him for it. One day, after rating Sheridan, he said he must have the money. Sheridan, having played off some of his plausible wheedling upon him, ended by saying that he was very much in want of twenty-five pounds to pay the expenses of a journey he was about to take, and he knew Shaw would be good-natured enough to lend it to him.

"'Pon my word," said Shaw, "this is too bad; after keeping me out of my money in so shameful a manner you now have the face to ask me for more; but it won't do—it is most disgraceful, and I must have my money."

"My dear fellow," replied Sheridan, "do hear

Sheridan.

reason; the sum you ask *me* for is a very considerable one; whereas I only ask *you* for five and twenty pounds!"

A friendly wine merchant, Challie, was dining with Sheridan when a noble visitor invited the wit down to his country place for the shooting season. Sheridan said that he was sorry not to be able to accept the invitation, assuming, as one of his reasons, that his friend Challie had determined on *keeping him in port* for the rest of the season.

"By-the-bye, Challie," said Sheridan playfully, "you would make a capital banker!"

"A banker!" echoed Challie, laughing heartily at the idea; "a banker, Mr. Sheridan! why so? a banker and a wine merchant?"

"The exact thing, my dear friend; for uniting the business of the wine merchant and banker, you could manage a capital business: since for those who took your *draughts* overnight you could reciprocate by honoring their *drafts* in the morning."

One day a creditor came into Sheridan's room for a bill, and found him seated before a table on which two or three hundred pounds in gold and notes were strewed.

"It's no use looking at that, my good fellow," said Sheridan, "that is all bespoken for debts of honor."

"Very well," replied the tradesman, tearing

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

up his security and throwing it on the fire, "now mine is a debt of honor."

"So it is, and must be paid at once," said Sheridan, handing him over the money.

On the subject of the liberty of the press (in 1810) Sheridan was very eloquent when he exclaimed of his opponents in Parliament:—"Give them a corrupt House of Lords; give them a venal House of Commons; give them a tyrannical Prince; give them a truckling court,—and let me have an unfettered press; I will defy them to encroach a hair's breadth upon the liberties of England."

In the House of Commons Pitt rallied Sheridan somewhat severely on his connection with the theatre. "No man admitted more than he did the abilities of that right honorable gentleman, the elegant sallies of his thought, the gay effusions of his fancy, his dramatic turns, and his epigrammatic points; and if they were reserved for a proper stage, they would no doubt receive what the right honorable gentleman's abilities always did receive, the plaudits of the audience; and it would be his fortune *sui plausu gaudere theatri!* But this was not the proper scene for the exhibition of these elegances, and he therefore must beg leave to call the attention of the House to the serious consideration of the very important questions before them."

Sheridan.

Sheridan in his reply proved himself quite equal to the occasion, and thus answered the young Minister: "He need not comment upon that particular sort of personality which the right honorable gentleman had thought proper to introduce, the propriety, the taste, the gentlemanly point of it must have been obvious to the House. But," said Mr. Sheridan, "let me assure the right honorable gentleman that I do now, and will at any time when he chooses to repeat this sort of allusion, meet it with the most sincere good humor. Nay, I will say more, flattered and encouraged by the right honorable gentleman's panegyric on my talents, if I ever again engage in the compositions he alludes to, I may be tempted to an act of presumption—to attempt an improvement on one of Ben Jonson's best characters—the character of the *Angry Boy* in the 'Alchymist.'"

A party of Sheridan's friends insisted on seeing him to his home when he was very tipsy. When they reached the street leading to the square in which he lived, he required them to leave him; they did so, but after they had proceeded a short distance, turned round and saw him standing where they had left him, and using his umbrella like a person who is counting objects before him.

"What on earth, Sherry, are you about?" they asked.

"Do you not see," said he, "that all the

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

houses in the square are going round and round? Well, I am waiting till mine comes by, and then I shall just step in."

A creditor whom Sheridan had perpetually avoided, met him at last plump, coming out of Pall Mall from St. James's Palace. There was no possibility of avoiding him, but Sheridan never lost his presence of mind.

"Oh," said he, "that's a beautiful mare you are on."

"D'ye think so!"

"Yes, indeed! How does he trot?"

The creditor, flattered, told him he should see, and immediately put her into full trotting pace. The instant he trotted off Sheridan turned into Pall Mall again, and was out of sight in a moment.

Kemble and Sheridan were drinking together one evening, says Michael Kelly in his *Reminiscences*, when Kemble complained of the want of novelty at Drury Lane Theatre, and said that he, as manager, felt uneasy.

"My dear Kemble," said Sheridan, "don't talk of grievances now."

But Kemble still kept on, saying, "Indeed, we must seek for novelty, or the theatre will sink—novelty, and novelty alone, can prop it."

"Then," replied Sheridan, with a smile, "if you want novelty, act Hamlet and have music played *between your pauses*."

Sheridan.

Sheridan made his appearance one day in a pair of new boots, which attracted the notice of some friends.

"Now, guess," said he, "how I came by these boots?"

Many *probable* guesses then took place. "No," said Sheridan, "no, you've not hit it, nor ever will—I bought them, *and paid for them!*"

Sheridan's parliamentary colleagues had brought in an extremely unpopular measure, on which they were defeated. He then said, that he had often heard of people knocking out their brains against a wall; but never before knew of anyone building a wall expressly for the purpose.

Sheridan's maiden speech in the House of Commons was far from being successful. When it was over, he went to the reporters' gallery, and asked a friend, Woodfall, how he had succeeded. "I am sorry to say I do not think this is your line," said that candid friend, "you had much better have stuck to your former pursuits."

On hearing this, Sheridan rested his head on his hands for a moment, and then vehemently exclaimed, "It is in me, however, and, by God, it shall come out."

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

“The right honorable gentleman,” said Sheridan, replying to Mr. Dundas in the House of Commons, “is indebted to his memory for his jests, and to his imagination for his facts.”

During the Westminster election contest, owing to the tactics of some of Sheridan’s supporters, one of the voters called out that he should withdraw his countenance from him.

“Take it away at once—take it away at once!” cried Sheridan, “it is the most villainous looking countenance I ever beheld.”

“By the silence that prevails,” said Sheridan, on entering a room full of guests, “I conclude that Lauderdale has been making a joke.”

Sheridan, the first time he met Tom after his marriage, was seriously angry with him, and told him that he had made his will and cut him off with a shilling.

Tom said he was, indeed, very sorry, and immediately added, “You don’t happen to have the shilling about you now, sir, do you?”

A long-winded member of Parliament stopped in the midst of a tedious oration to take a glass of water. Sheridan immediately “rose to a point of order.” Everybody wondered what the point of order could be.

“What is it?” asked the Speaker.

Sheridan.

"I think, sir," said Sheridan, "that it is out of order for a windmill to go by water."

One of the school-day *mots* attributed to Sheridan is this:—A gentleman having a remarkably long visage was one day riding by the school, when he heard young Sheridan say, "That gentleman's face is longer than his life." Struck by the strangeness of the remark, he turned his horse's head, and requested the boy's meaning.

"Sir," replied he, "I meant no offence in the world, but I have read in the Bible at school, that a man's life is but a span, and I am sure your *face* is double that length."

Lord Ellenborough (then Mr. Law) had once to cross-examine Sheridan. He commenced thus: "Pray, Mr. Sheridan, do answer my questions, without point or epigram."

"You say true, Mr. Law," retorted the wit, "your questions are without point or epigram."

Sheridan once succeeded admirably in entrapping a noisy member who was in the habit of interrupting every speaker with cries of "Hear, hear!" He took an opportunity to allude to a well-known political character of the times, whom he represented as a person who wished to play the rogue, but had only sense enough to play the fool.

Anecdotes and Witty Sayings.

"Where," exclaimed Sheridan, in continuation, and with great emphasis, "where shall we find a more foolish knave or a more knavish fool than this?"

"Hear, hear!" was instantly bellowed from the accustomed bench. The wicked wit bowed, thanked the gentleman for his ready reply to the question, and sat down amid convulsions of laughter from all but their unfortunate subject.

A loquacious author, after babbling some time about his piece to Sheridan, said, "Sir, I fear I have been intruding on your attention."

"Not at all, I assure you," replied he; "I was thinking of *something else*."

One day, when quite a boy, Tom Sheridan, who had evidently been reading about the Necessarians, suddenly asked his father, "Pray, my good father, did you ever do anything in a state of perfect indifference, without a motive, I mean, of some kind or other?"

Sheridan, who saw what was coming, and had no relish for metaphysical discussion, replied, "Yes, certainly."

"Indeed?" said Tom.

"Yes, indeed."

"What, total indifference; total, entire, thorough indifference?"

"Yes, total, entire, thorough indifference."

Sheridan.

“Well, now then, my dear father, tell me what it is that you can do with (mind) total, entire, thorough indifference.”

“Why, I can listen to you, Tom,” said Sheridan.

THE END.

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